Old Corn Gems

NUMBER TWENTY-FIVE

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"What Shall I Render?"

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now, in the presence of all his people."—Psa. 116: 12-14.

GRATITUDE is the responsive chord to benevolence in every truly noble heart, and no harmony is sweeter or more inspiring to noble deeds and lofty purposes. God would have his children cultivate for their own sake, as well as for the sake of others, all the graces of true nobility and moral excellence. It is therefore fitting that we should keep in mind a careful record of all deeds of love and kindness toward us, and be careful to return the gratitude due. **How often does love go unrequited because selfishness crowds out the nobler instincts of the soul.**

While human kindnesses often draw largely upon us for the exercise of this grace, how much more does the constant and disinterested benevolence of our Heavenly Father. To him we are indebted for every good that we possess; and as his consecrated children we are also the special objects of his grace. Which of us cannot trace a long line of special providences on our behalf? Let us call to mind how he brought us up "out of the horrible pit" of condemnation to death, and "out of the miry clay" of personal sin, and "set our feet upon the rock" Christ Jesus; and then by his truth "established our goings." Yea, and he hath put a new song in our mouth, even praise unto our God."—Psa. 40:2, 3.

How wonderfully God has helped his people: they are his constant care; no good thing doth he withhold from them; and all things are made to work together for their good. In the smallest and in the greatest affairs of life he is ever watching for our interests, and the evidences of his care are all about us.

What, then, shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits? What, indeed, have we to render that we have not received of him? Nothing. But the inspired penman suggests what we may acceptably render as follows:—

(1) "I will take the cup of salvation." Just as a parent loves to see his child gratefully and appreciatively accept his favors, so God regards our acceptance of his great salvation,—the gift of his love purchased for us at great cost. Therefore we will obey his call and take the cup of salvation through faith in Christ the Redeemer.

(2) "And call upon the name of the Lord." He has invited our confidence and has proved his worthiness of it; therefore will we trust him and not be afraid. He who has redeemed us at a great price is both able and willing to perfect in and for us his great salvation. Yes, let us give him our fullest confidence.

(3) "I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now, in the presence of all his people." This also the Lord will regard as an expression of gratitude. To render our consecrated hearts and talents, in glad and cheerful service, is but a reasonable return for all his goodness. Let us, therefore, do it gladly and with zeal and energy. It will be but a small return at best, but **the measure of love and zeal that goes with it will indicate the measure of our gratitude.** And let us do it promptly—"now"—and to such an extent that it will be blessedly realized by the Lord's people specially—"in the presence of all his people." Z. '94:218.

NOTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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How comforting and heart assuring to be able to look by faith to our Lord and Master and to realize that he is at the helm; not only to supervise particularly the affairs and interests of his consecrated saints, but also in a more general way to guide the nations and their affairs so as to humble them all and dash them all in pieces as a potter's vessel in the great time of trouble by which his better Kingdom will be introduced. The more the billows near us roll, the more let us hold to our anchorage within the vail. Z. '98:132.

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Be not men's servant; think what costly price
Was paid that thou might'st His own bondsman be,
Whose service perfect freedom is. Let this
Hold fast thy heart. His claim is great to thee.
All His are thine to serve; Christ's brethren here
Are needing aid, in them thou servest Him.
The least of all is still His member dear,
The weakest cost His life-blood to redeem.
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Only the reign of Christ can bring the Golden Age. Z. '98:168.

We remember our Lord's words, to the effect that the deceptions would ultimately prove so severe that they would "deceive, if it were possible, the very elect." It will NOT be possible, because for this class the Lord will provide special protection, special warnings, special assistances. Z. '08:371.

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The child of God may be persecuted, but he will not be forsaken, even though the outward experiences may seem for the time to indicate that he is forsaken. Z. '17:270.

GENERAL CONVENTION

Many of the friends are making a special effort to attend the Convention at Bellingham January 30th, 31st and February 1st, when three days of sweet fellowship will be enjoyed. For further information write Brother B. A. Ish, Box 21, Bellingham, Wash.

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OLD CORN GEMS

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"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18:51.

Evil Speaking–Busy-Bodying–Truth-Hiding

"Speak evil of no man." (Titus 3: 2.) "Let none of you suffer as a busy-body in other men's matters." (1 Pet. 3: 16.) "Speaking the truth in love."—Eph. 4: 15.

ALL Christians who have made advancement in the development of the graces and fruits of the Lord's Spirit accept as true the texts of Scripture cited. They cheerfully admit the correctness of the points these texts set forth, and agree that it is their duty and the duty of all Christian people to very carefully, very rigidly follow these divine instructions. But, strange to say, it appears that in the majority of minds the reasoning faculties become more or less entangled so that very wrong constructions are put upon the words of heavenly wisdom. The result is that many of the Lord's dear people find the Episcopal confession fitting to them, "We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done." One peculiar feature connected with the matter is that some of the Lord's dear people, sincerely desirous of doing his will and naught else, after making blunders and getting into a great mess of trouble, fail to discern wherein they erred; hence with them the experience has brought no lesson, and instead of being helps and bright-shining lights they are stumbling-blocks to a considerable degree and thus offset largely the good they desire to do, or perhaps really do accomplish. It will be clearly understood, then, that the object of this dissertation is not to hurt, wound, offend, but to assist the members of the Body of Christ to accomplish more fully the essence of their covenant with the Lord and the desire of their hearts.

"What Is Evil Speaking?"

We answer: That to speak anything that is derogatory respecting another, to tell things uncomplimentary of them, is evil speaking. Some have the impression that evil speaking is lying and consider that speaking the truth is always in order. This is a misconception. The speaking of anything that is prejudicial to the character of another, whether it be truth or falsehood, is evil speaking in the proper acceptance of that term. The Lord's Spirit, as well as his Word, forbids evil speaking because the Lord's Spirit is the spirit of love and kindness, and evil speaking, true or false, is repudiated by love, is contrary to love, is born of some evil motive, either busy-bodying and gossiping, or, worse still, malice, envy or strife, and all of these the Apostle designates in his list of "the works of the Devil."

It is said that there are "exceptions to every rule," and so there are to this one. For instance, if you were a witness to a murder, a theft, or any other heinous crime, it would be a duty to society to speak of the evil, to report it to the proper authorities, the mayor, chief of police, or whoever. This would be evil speaking, it is true, but this is an exceptional case and requires exceptional treatment. It does not, therefore, imply any wrong motive on your part in respect to the wrong-doer—anger, hatred, malice or strife, but is called for by the interests of society and your appreciation of the spirit of love to them. Indeed, in some States the law holds a silent witness as jointly responsible with the principal offender. In the Church also there is an exception noted in the Scriptures, namely, that if the trespass be of sufficient importance and likely to break our fellowship with the offender we may go to him and discuss the matter with him alone—not with a view of judging him, condemning him, etc., but with the object of helping the brother out of some view of matters or course of conduct that seems to us to be wrong, sinful, contrary to the Word of God. Before going to him or her, we are to make self-examination to see that we are not in a fault-finding mood, and that the matter is one that really concerns us, either in our personal relationship to the brother or in our mutual relationship to the members of the Church of Christ, whose interest we believe might be injured by the brother's course. We should go kindly and with the hope in our hearts that the matter which seemed strange and in violation of God's Word might prove upon explanation to be nothing of the kind.

We are to go hoping that in any event the Lord will bless our mission, not to the injury of the brother or sister, but to his or her comfort, succor, deliverance from what we believe to be a wrong course. It is only after we have taken this step and the wrong course is persisted in, either to our injury or to the injury of the Church—only then are we permitted to speak to another of the thing which we consider to be an evil. **Even then the speaking must be done in the PRESENCE OF THE ACCUSED**, that he may have the fullest opportunity to present his view of the matter, as set forth in the Scriptures in Matt. 18:15-17 and explained in detail in Dawn Studies, Vol. VI. If it were not so pitiable and so grievous an error it would be amusing to note how some conscientious brethren and sisters dodge this matter of evil speaking and seemingly its point entirely. For instance, one of these may say to another, "I have just heard something about Sister C which shocked me fearfully. I do not know what to think about it. I should like to have your advice, but of course I could not tell you what the matter is, for that would be evil speaking, which, as the Lord's follower, I would not be privileged to speak and you would not be privileged to hear." Poor,silly sheep! Such seem not to discern that they are at the time engaged in the very worst kind of evil speaking. In nine cases out of ten, if they would tell all that they know, the impression upon their auditor would not be one-tenth as bad as the one given. This serious error, which is doing so much harm in the whole world and amongst the Lord's people, is an evidence of two things: (1) A lack of reasoning power, (2) a lack of the spirit of love.

We are trying in this article to correct the first defect and to help some to reason more correctly; but it is not ours to help them over the second defect, their lack of love, **which really lies at the foundation of the wrong.** If they had loved the sister of whom they had heard the evil report, they would never have breathed a word of it to another soul, but would have gone directly to the condemned one in love and with a hope that the report was false, and would have told her, as a friend and as the spirit of love would prompt, all that they had heard or seen or misunderstood, and would have assured her that they hoped there was some explanation of it: but in no event should any hint of the matter escape them.

"Suffering as a Busy-Body"

There are generally two sides to a matter. In nearly every instance in which one person violates the command, "Speak evil of no man," assistance is rendered by the one to whom the evil is told. He or she "draws the matter out" by questions or hints or suggestions or looks of interest or encouraging comments, etc. **Undoubtedly such a hearer of evil is in the Lord's sight equally guilty with the speaker of the evil.** The difficulty with both is that they lack the spirit of love, which the Apostle refers to, saying, "Charity thinketh no evil," but "covereth a multitude of faults." The first intimation that something scandalous or unkind is about to be said respecting another should lead us to shrink back and feel the fear and realize that the Adversary is near to assist in any evil work. The wise course, as already seen, would be to say promptly, "My dear Sister or Brother, excuse me, but are not you and I both the Lord's children, and can we not please God better and advance our own spiritual welfare more by giving heed to his Word and developing in our own hearts and minds the spirit of love, instead of back-biting and devouring one another? Let us think of each other's good traits, good qualities, as the Apostle would have us do." If such a proper course lose you the friendship of anyone it will be to your advantage, for if he or she were right-minded such kindly treatment would be helpful, and you would be at once advised that they fully agree with you and are also striving in the same direction.

How often have we heard people say, "Yes, indeed, I wish that I had never heard it! It has caused me a deal of trouble and suffering." These are the people mentioned by the Apostle—who are suffering as busy-bodies in other men's matters, contrary to the divine direction and the spirit of love. They are getting their deserts, and the chances are that they will do spiritual injury to themselves and also do spiritual injury to others through their busy-bodying. Few of us have time enough to attend to all of the affairs of the world and still give proper attention to our own. "Sweep before your own door" has become a proverb, the intimation being that those who pay great attention to their neighbors' affairs are neglecting home duties and responsibilities and that they are likely to get themselves into trouble in so doing. The Christian of advanced experience emphasizes the fact that he has quite a sufficiency of knowledge of evil in himself and his environment without making special search for the weaknesses and blemishes of others or for their liberties, which perhaps to him seem to be sin; as in the Apostle's case when he speaks of some who "Crept in to spy out our liberties." We may be sure that all to whom the Apostle referred were in a dangerous position by reason of their busy-bodying, and we may be equally sure that the same principle will always hold good. **However good our intentions, none will be crowned for striving unlawfully.**—2 Tim. 2:5.

There are some so constituted that it is second nature for them to attempt to regulate everybody else according to their own ideals and standards, forgetful of the fact stated by the Apostle, "To his own Master every servant stands or falls." Our limitations respecting what we may and may not do by way of interference in the affairs of others are very many. To some in olden times it was a terrible sin to eat meat such as was generally sold in public because it was previously offered to an idol. The Apostle took a truer view of the subject when he declared that the idol was nothing anyway, recognizing the fact that the offering of the meat to the idol could do the meat no harm. There were some, however, ready to spy in such matters and to busy-body themselves with other men's affairs, and some of these were perhaps stumbled by reason of their busy-bodying tendencies. The fact that the Apostle was very willing to yield to these weaker brethren and say that he would abstain from meat entirely does not prove that he was wrong and they right. It merely proves that he was large-hearted enough to forego his own liberties—which were in no wise condemned in the Scriptures—for their sakes because of their weaknesses, their lack of logic, and their weakness along the lines of busy-bodying. Our Lord addressed busy-bodies when he suggested that they were like the man who went to his neighbor and desired to help him to get a mote out of his eye, without being aware of the fact that he had a whole beam in his own eye. Jesus said to such, "First pluck out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pluck out the mote out of thy brother's eye."—Luke 6:42.

A Truth-Telling Obligation

We have already pointed out that it is not permissible even to tell the truth where it would be slanderous or injurious or calculated to bring dishonor to our neighbor; that to tell the truth under such circumstances would be evil-speaking from the Scriptural standpoint and forbidden, not only by the Word of the Lord, but by the spirit of love for the brethren, and that it would be wrong even to listen to such a statement, and that rather the one attempting such evil-speaking should be in love rebuked and helped to overcome the weakness. But there is a truth-telling which is in harmony with love. If a scandal-monger and back-biter and slandered and evil-speaker has disclosed some matter to us, it is our duty not to repeat the matter and not even hint of it to others, but it is our duty to tell the matter and all that we know about it to the one who has been slandered, vilified, spoken against. Why is it our duty to do this? We answer, that the same spirit of love which would prompt us not to speak derogatively of another to others should prompt us to tell the aggrieved one the facts: (1) It will put him on his guard and assist him in overtaking the falsehood or misrepresentation, and all lovers of the truth and righteousness should be glad to assist in such a manner. (2) It would be very helpful, doubtless, to the slanderers, evil-speakers; a practical lesson would thus be brought home to them, and they might learn before it was too late for learning, that they are still cultivating the works of the flesh and the devil, which must be eradicated from their hearts before they would be ready for the glorious change of the First Resurrection and a share with Christ in glory, honor and immortality. (3) This course would be profitable to ourselves because it would assist in developing in each true courage on the side of right, on the side of truth, the Lord's side, and against the side of the devil, the side of slander and evil speaking.

Strange to say, something in our crooked heads or something of the Adversary's deception at times leads some of the Lord's true people into a very wrong course in respect to this matter. For instance, a case came under our observation recently which illustrates this: Mr. A communicated "lovingly" some slanderous information to Mrs. B respecting Mrs. C. Mrs. B "lovingly" heard the awful news and then communicated with Mrs. D, saying that she had heard some awful things about Mrs. C and was greatly distressed thereby. Mrs. D, intimately acquainted with Mrs. C, assured Mrs. B that there was certainly no foundation for any evil speaking. Mrs. B said that she would like to tell Mrs. D the whole of it, but dared not do so, as it would be evil speaking. Mrs. D urged that in any event Mrs. B should go to Mrs. C and tell her the evil things that had been spoken about her and give her the name of her traducer, so that she might go to him in harmony with Matt. 18:15-17; but dear Mrs. B was horrified at the suggestion and declared that not for her life would she be so untrue to Mr. A, and thus "speak evil" of him.

Now notice the mistakes made all through these transactions: (1) Mr. A began the matter as a back-biter, speaking evil of Mrs. C. (2) Mrs. B, in listening to that and not rebuking it promptly and before allowing it to proceed, was a partaker in the guilt. (3) Mrs. B became a slanderer and evil-speaker and back-biter on her own account when she communicated the slander in vague terms to Mrs. D. It matters not that she did not go into details. She gave the bad impression, possibly a much worse impression than if she had told all that had been told to her. (4) Mrs. D was possibly at fault also in listening at all to the slanders, but she took the right course in attempting the defence of one who had not been heard, and in urging that the whole matter be taken at once to Mrs. C that she might know of the evil that was being done her in the robbery of her good name by Mr. A. (5) Mrs. B's suggestion that she would be "evil speaking" in taking this open, above-board course shows that she labored under serious misapprehension of the points of equity. She was partaker with the thief in his robbery of a reputation. (Psa. 50:18.) The reputation of another had been stolen and she was helping to secrete the thief. Yet, as we say, the delusions of our twisted minds and the cunning of the Adversary get some of the Lord's people into these difficulties so that they take unwittingly the side of the Adversary, who puts light for darkness and darkness for light. Mrs. B "would not for the world" expose Mr. A, believing that in so doing she would be "evil speaking." What sophistry! The very opposite of the truth! That was the one and only time she should have told the matter, apologizing at the same time for her own share in the sin. The person against whom the evil was spoken is the one and the **only** one to whom it should have been mentioned at all, and as for Mr. A, if it turned out to be discreditable to him and he lost some of his prestige thereby, it might mean the greatest blessing that had ever come to him and might recover him from the snare of the Adversary, which, if not recovered from, would most assuredly hinder his entrance into the Kingdom.

Another Practical Illustration

Here is another instance which came under our observation and which illustrates the awful danger of this pernicious principle of "evil speaking," slandering, back-biting and the subtle forms it may take and the great danger to be accomplished.

Mrs. V took offense at Mr. W. (It matters not for this illustration whether there was ground for the offense or not.) Being very conscientious she felt that she could not tell the circumstance to her friends; and indeed probably another consideration weighed in this matter. She felt that to tell the truth would not serve her purposes, as many would doubtless consider that the wrong and blame belonged to herself. Under the Adversary's guidance, of which doubtless she was unconscious, she began to slander Mr. W in a pantomime way—by looking hurt, acting offended and disconsolate. As she foreknew, this led her friends to question her: What is your trouble? Indirectly and with apparent unwillingness she intimated that Mr. W. was the source of her grief, but that it was too deep for her to mention and that she was too noble to speak evil even with a cause. Promptly her friends, X, Y and Z, took the bait, rallied to her support and, true to human nature, struggled to see which could be the chief busy-body. Incidentally we point out that they should have remembered the Scriptures cited at the head of this article and should have given Mrs. V the Scriptural advice, Go to Mr. W and deal with him along the lines of Matt. 18:15-17. They should not have picked, meddled, busy-bodied, and, in violating this divine rule, they suffered the consequences. These well meaning busy-bodies, X, Y and Z, began the system of "investigation," declaring to their own hearts and each other that it was the love of God alone which was prompting them to help a poor Sister. We will not question the honesty of their claim, but content ourselves with pointing out that their love was not properly exercised along Scriptural lines. They began with Mrs. V—Did Mr. W do thus or so? Mrs. V's conscience would not allow her to say, "Yes," because their surmise had quite overshot the mark of any grievance she could have claimed. But she was in the humor to crave sympathy and to forward her designs of bringing contumely upon Mr. W, hence she merely sighed and looked sad and refused to answer Yes or No. The busy-bodies, X, Y and Z, held a consultation and concluded that the reason she did not answer their question was that her trouble was far worse than anything of which they had dreamed. Again they approached Mrs. V with sympathy and condolences, telling her that they knew now that it was worse than she had first suggested and that they had concluded that it must be something even worse than they could even imagine or suggest.

Mrs. V was somewhat shocked that her method of slander by insinuation and silence had succeeded so far beyond her original intention. But she felt that she could not go back on the matter now and tell the sympathizers, X, Y and Z, the plain, simple truth, because then they would forever lose confidence in her and discern that by her methods she deceived them. Thus from step to step Mrs. V became involved and her conscience injured until finally she felt that her only course to preserve her standing with her friends, X, Y and Z, was to take the position that their worst insinuations respecting Mr. W were well founded. Her conscience squirmed for a time, but love of sympathy and of the esteem of others and the fear that the truth would cause the loss of these, bound her hand and foot to the falsehood which she had acted and slander which she had suggested by action, insinuation and silence. The result was that for a time all four of those ladies were in great danger of losing the Truth and going into outer darkness—yea, into the Second Death.

I am glad that we do not have to record such an outcome, but the dangers were certainly sufficiently thrilling for all concerned. How promptly all of that evil condition could have been nipped in the bud. When Mrs. V was overtaken in the fault and began to slander Mr. W by intimation, her friends, X, Y and Z, should have remembered the Apostle's words: Ye that are spiritual restore such an one in a spirit of meekness, remembering yourselves also, lest ye should be tempted. (Gal. 6:1.) If Mrs. V had refused to be restored and continued her process of villification by conduct, these friends, acting along the lines of the Golden Rule, should have gone to Mr. W and told him of the matter, Mrs. V's conduct, insinuations, etc. What a great help this proper Golden-Rule course would have been to Mrs. V, Mr. W and the three friends! How it would have saved them from the Adversary's snare, which for a time enwrapped them and caused them a spiritual blight.

Don't Tell or You Are a Tell-Tale

Mark those persons who request you to keep secrets from those to whom they properly belong. We do not mean by this that there are no proper secrets in business, in the family, etc., but we do mean that if anyone has a tale to tell us derogatory to another, and first attempts to bind our reason and judgment with a vow of secrecy, it is time for us to be on guard against that person, and to tell him or her in no uncertain terms that we believe that such an attempt to bind our conscience or judgment in advance is belittling to us and ignoble to him. Let us tell such in kindly terms that their ways are ways of darkness, whether they are aware of the fact or not; and that we decline to be a companion in the dark ways which their language intimates, and that we advise them to come out of the dark into more honest methods and practices. Let us tell them this in such a manner as will wound them as little as possible, but in such a manner as will settle it for all time as between them and us and that we do not wish to have their dark secrets—we do not wish to be sharers in their slanders and back-biting and "evil-speaking" and thieving of reputation.

Fear of being called a tell-tale has been the Adversary's method for secreting wrongs these many years, and not infrequently it is used as a lash to hinder "over-comers" from doing their duty. They must overcome this, and must learn that it is a sin not to tell the truth to the **right** person for fear of offending a slanderer, equally as wrong as to tell a slander to the **wrong** person.

This is a part of the overcoming, the victory which love and justice gain in our hearts. We must learn to pay no attention to the world's false standards and sneers of "tell-tale" and to pay every attention to the divine standard, the Golden Rule. It is the duty of every clerk or employee to make known to his employer any matter of consequence seriously affecting his interests, either financial or moral, as according to the Golden Rule he would wish that employer to do to him if their situation in life were reversed. It is the duty of every one hearing slander and defamation of a friend's reputation to give that friend the fullest information respecting the matter, just as much as under common law it would be his duty to report the matter if he were a witness to a theft of material goods. Fear of consequences must not hinder our faithfulness to this divine principle, this Golden Rule.

Let us fix it in our minds as an inviolable element of the Golden Rule by which we are bound, that if evil speakings come to our knowledge without our being in any sense a party to them or able to prevent them we will **always and promptly** bring the matter to the attention of the brother or sister or person whose name or reputation is traduced and will tell that person **all that has been heard and the name of our informant,** and everything else that will enable him or her to pursue the traducer, according to the instructions in Matt. 18:15-17. Whoever fails to see this, the proper course of a Christian, fails to appreciate, we think, the Golden Rule, which is binding upon all the disciples of Christ. Z. '08: 348-351.

Fervent in Spirit--Serving the Lord

THE HEAVENLY FATHER, through His various agencies operating during the more than eighteen centuries of this Gospel Age, has been seeking for His Son a companion, a Bride of many members, although in comparison to the world a "little flock." Various good qualities are desired and all of these will make the Bride class in the character-likeness of their Redeemer, their betrothed Bridegroom. They are deficient in all of these qualities according to the flesh, but fortunately the flesh will not be the basis of the decision as to their worthiness or unworthiness of the glorious prize. All will depend upon the mind, the will, the heart. It must be not only good, but absolutely perfect. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." They shall be the children of God. They shall be the joint-heirs of the Redeemer.

This purity of heart which the Lord approves and desires might be summed up in the expression, **loyalty of heart**—loyalty to principles of Truth and righteousness, the principles of the Divine Government—loyalty to God the Father and to our Lord Jesus Christ and to all the members of His Body. This perfect heart-loyalty includes, therefore, love for God and for the Redeemer and for the brethren, as well as sympathetic love for the world of mankind, in harmony with the Divine purpose and Revelation. The Apostle says, "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord," and "so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."—2 Pet. 1:8, 11.

There is a particular force attaching to this word "abound." All of God's people, all begotten of the Holy Spirit, are inspired by the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of justice and loyalty. But how about the **degree,** the **abounding,** the having of this love permeate **all** of life's affairs? If this Spirit of the Lord **abound** in us it will influence our business, our pleasure, our homes, our workshops, our kitchens, our dining rooms, our bed chambers, our very thoughts.

May it be possible to have a measure of the Lord's Spirit with very little abounding, and hence have merely an enjoyment of some spiritual things, on special occasions, at church, etc.? It is the **ABOUNDING love, the all-pervading influence of our Lord in the lives and in all of life's affairs** of those who would have the abundant entrance into the Kingdom of Messiah as members of the Bride class, that is required. If they have this abounding loyalty and love they will be copies of God's dear Son, the Redeemer; otherwise, they will not. And God has predestinated that only such as are copies of His Son shall have a share in the Kingdom of Messiah. Others may reach, indeed, a secondary place, in the "great company" class, but will never reach the throne and never be members of the Bride class.

How important, then, that we discern clearly the necessity for this abounding love, this zeal for God and for righteousness which will amount to a hatred of iniquity, even while loving, succoring and helping the evil-doers into right paths. . . .

We perceive that just such testings as we should expect are in progress throughout the Lord's ripe wheat field. Divine providence is permitting tests of love and loyalty, faith and obedience, brotherly kindness and patience. Sometimes the trials come to the classes through the Elders, who should be the very ones to help, protect, admonish and assist the flock. Sometimes the Elders assume a lordly disposition quite contrary to the Divine Word and example and trying to the patience and love of the brethren.

Sometimes the trial is from the other side. Some members of the class may be very exacting, very ready to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, very ready to find fault with everything that the Elder may do, however faithful he may be. Such experiences, whether coming from the one side or the other, are tests, and it behooves each of the Lord's people to see just how he receives these tests and just what effect they have upon his own heart and character. If the experiences embitter him, anger him, or wound deeply his pride, it proves that he needed just such disciplinary experiences to show him his own lack and to point him to the Throne of heavenly grace for mercy and help.

Again, some of the dear classes are assailed by the Adversary through false doctrines and have their own difficulties in endeavoring to defend the Truth, the Divine Plan of the Ages, and to maintain their stand in harmony therewith. Or, on the other hand, the difficulty may arise from some of the dear friends being hypercritical and trying to find differences where there are none—fomenting the spirit of strife rather than the spirit of harmony—discord rather than love.

We exhort, dear brothers and sisters, what we all can agree to, namely, that we are in the **testing time** and these various matters are our **test.** Only by the exercise of much fervency of spirit, much zeal for the Lord, for the Truth and for the brethren, can we hope to **STAND** faithfully and to be of

What shall we say of the Christianity of the brother or sister who, meeting a debtor, or one whom he esteems to be a debtor (justly or unjustly), thus abuses his fellow servant? But it is much more important that we should know how the Lord would regard such an one, and in the parable before us he has answered it fully. In the parable the King was wroth and called the forgiven but unforgiving servant to account, pronouncing him at once a "wicked servant." And applying the lesson of the parable, our Lord declares: "So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from the hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Let it not be overlooked that our Lord here very particularly called attention to the difference between an outward and formal expression of forgiveness with smooth words, and the true forgiveness which is from the heart. The former, or outward forgiveness, is only lip-deep, and means that a wrangling of an evil, unforgiving spirit is within, and that it will only be a matter of time until the pent-up force of malice and hatred will break forth in words of slander. God reads the heart and, whatever the lip professions may be, he will not consider these unless the heart and life correspond with them. It is in vain, therefore, that anyone should say, I love my brother, and at the same time seek either by word or act to do him injury. All the evil-speaking, malice, hatred, envy, strife, proceeds from **evil in the heart**: hence, the necessity on the part of all who desire to be of the Lord's body, that they "purge out the old leaven of malice" that they may be members indeed of the unleavened loaf—the body of Christ. . . .

We cannot properly leave this subject without calling attention to certain conditions which ought to precede forgiveness. For instance, in the parable the king does not exercise compassion until the debtor asks for it: so also God does not forgive our sins until we acknowledge our sins and ask his forgiveness. Likewise, in the parable, the second servant, who owed a hundred pence (about sixteen dollars), asked mercy of the one to whom he owed it, before that one was obliged to forgive: and in a further comment on the subject, mentioned by Luke (17:3, 4), our Lord expressly states the propriety of expecting those who trespass against us to make some acknowledgement of their fault before expressing full forgiveness. He says, "If thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, **saying, I repent!** thou shalt forgive him."

We are not to accept one portion of the divine direction and to ignore another portion: we are not to say that our Lord meant it, when he said, "forgive him," and that he did not mean it when he said, "Rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." With the majority of people, however, it would probably be quite unnecessary to urge the propriety of repentance;—**unless they were the transgressors whose duty it is to repent.** Most people are sufficiently disinclined to forgive, to wait until their forgiveness is asked. The trouble is that then the large majority apparently do not "forgive from the **heart**" but merely from the lips. Heart forgiveness leaves no sting, no animosity, no grudge.

On the other side of the question, however, a caution is necessary. The Christian is to have the loving, generous disposition of heart, a copy of the Heavenly Father's disposition. In trivial affairs he is to have so much sympathy and love that he will take no notice, just as God for Christ's sake deals with us and does not impute sin to us, except as it represents knowledge and wilfulness. With such a rule operating amongst Christians, a determination not to recognize as an offence anything that is not **purposely** done, or **intended** as an offense, would be a great blessing to all, and the proper God-like course. The transgressions to which our Lord refers, are no trivial affairs of no consequence, are not evil surmisings and imaginings, are not rumors, are not fancied insults, but positive wrongs done us, which are susceptible of proofs and on account of which it is our duty, kindly and lovingly and wisely to give some proper rebuke;—some intimation that we recognize the wrong and that it has grieved us and hurt us. Then comes in the divine rule respecting the one and only proper manner of rebuke, pointed out in (Matt. 18:15-17).

The disposition to forgive should be with us always, and should be manifested by us at all times. Our loving generosity and kindness and desire to think no evil or as little evil as possible, should be manifest by all the words and acts of life. This is God-like. God had a kind, benevolent, generous sentiment toward us, even while we were yet sinners. Nor did he wait for the sinners to ask forgiveness, but promptly manifested his desire for harmony and his readiness to forgive. The whole Gospel message is to this effect: "Be ye reconciled to God." Our hearts should be so full of this disposition toward forgiveness that our faces would not have a hard look, nor our words of reproof a bitter sting: they should **manifest** the loving forgiveness that we should have in our hearts at all times.

Forgiveness, "in your hearts," is the condition which is always to obtain there: we should never harbor any other feeling than that of forgiveness and good will toward all, no matter how seriously they may have trespassed against us: and if this be the case, we will be longing and anxious to exercise the forgiveness outwardly and to express it to the repentant ones. Hence, we will not seek to compel the most elaborate statement on the part of the penitent; but, like the father of the prodigal, to see the repentant one coming in an attitude of humility will touch our hearts and prompt us to go out part way to meet him, and to forgive him, and to kiss him, and to put on the robe of fullest fellowship and brotherhood.

"If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."—Matt. 6:15. Z. '98:123-126.

Let us remember the Master's words, "If the light that is in thee become darkness, how great is that darkness." Such are in a more pitiable condition than the world who never saw. Let us remember, too, that all kinds of blindness are more or less contagious and let us guard our spiritual sight as one of the most precious boons given of the Lord. Z. '09:205.

"Perfecting Holiness"

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."—2 Cor. 7: 1.

HOLINESS is moral purity; and it is written that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14); and again, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8.) Purity of heart signifies purity of the will or intention, the main-spring of life. To be perfectly holy or pure in every sense of the word would signify absolute perfection, which no man can now claim; but those who by faith are clothed with the righteousness of Christ are now **reckoned** "holy and acceptable unto God" (Rom. 12:1), the righteousness of Christ being imputed to them by faith. These, whose hearts are fully consecrated and loyal to the Lord, are "the pure in heart," whose privilege it is to see God.

While **the heart** of every accepted child of God must be pure from the very beginning of his Christian life (otherwise he is not accepted or owned as a child), yet, as the Apostle suggests above, there must be from that time onward a gradual work of **perfecting holiness** in the fear (filial fear) of God. That is (being graciously **reckoned** of God as holy through Christ, from the hour of our entire consecration to his will, because our will and effort are to be so), we are to go on striving daily against our natural imperfections, and endeavoring as nearly as possible to make the **reckoned** holiness more and more **actual**. Thus we should continue to **grow** in grace and in the actual likeness of the Lord.

Some Christians make the very serious mistake of supposing that they, as merely passive subjects, may receive instantaneously the blessing of holiness as a mark of God's special favor. But such a conception is very far from the Apostle's idea, as expressed above. He represents the attainment of holiness as a life work, and the individual Christian as the active, and not as the passive, agent in accomplishing it. From the standpoint of a reckoned holiness he is to go on, day after day, and year after year, in the work of actual cleansing of himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit—of person and of mind—"perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

In the exceeding great and precious promises we have abundant incentives to strive daily to perfect holiness; but these must be held before the mind that they be not crowded into the background by the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of its pursuits. The pure in heart—whose will is only to serve and please him—do see God by faith and with the eyes of their understanding. They see him in his Word and his plan, as he graciously opens it up to their minds as meat in due season; they see him in his mighty works—of creation, and of redemption and salvation; they see him in nature, whose open book is ever eloquent in his praise to those who have eyes to read; by faith they see him in the secret closet communions when there is no eye to see and no ear to hear but God's, where the heart may freely unburden itself of its load and lay down its cares and feel that unutterable sense of divine sympathy and love which only those can understand who have taken the Lord as their personal friend and counselor. They see him, too, in his providences; for, having entered into their closets and shut to the door and prayed to their Father in secret, the open reward of his sure and safe leading always follows, according to his promise.

How blessed it is thus to see God—to realize his presence and power and his abiding favor in all the vicissitudes of life; to watch him and see how, as the days and years go by, he makes all things work together for good to them that love him, and to see also, from the grand standpoint of observation he gives us, how glorious a destiny he has carved out for us and for all the willing and obedient subjects of his authority.

If we cultivate acquaintance with God and with our Lord Jesus, communing with them through the divine word and prayer, almost unconsciously to ourselves the work of perfecting holiness progresses. To be thus in communion with them is to receive more and more of their mind and disposition. And having the mind of God thus in us, as the controlling principle of our actions, to what purifications of the flesh it will also lead!

It begins at once to clean up the whole man. Old unclean, as well as sinful, habits are put away; unseemly conversation is not permitted to pass the door of the lips, or if, by force of old habit, slips of this kind occur, they are promptly repented of and rectified; and unholy thoughts are not entertained. The same spirit of holiness prompts also to the cleansing and purifying of the body, the clothing, the home, and all with which we have to do; for the outward man must be in conformity with the pure heart within, and with the heavenly guests that make their abode with us.—John 14:23.

It is quite possible, however, that the more we succeed in purifying ourselves of the old carnal nature, the more we may realize the imperfections that still remain; for the purifying process is also an educating one: we learn to appreciate and admire purity, holiness, the more thoroughly we assimilate it, until "the beauty of holiness" becomes the most desirable of all possessions, that which is lacking of its glory is our deepest concern and the great work of perfecting holiness becomes the chief business of life. Let the good work go on, dearly beloved, and, in the end, the Lord himself shall be your exceeding great reward. Z. '94: 374-376.

While not attempting to judge the hearts of any who have gone out from us, we may be confident that the Lord did not allow them to go out without a sufficient reason. **We regard their loss of spiritual sight as a Divine judgment upon them,** just as truly as we regard the opening of the eyes of their understanding as a mark of Divine favor. Remembering that the Lord is not dealing arbitrarily either in receiving His people into the light nor in casting some out of the light, we are bound to suppose that there were conditions of heart in these, our friends, with which the Lord was not well pleased. Z. '10: 292.

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Homing the Ark at Jerusalem

2 Samuel 6: 1-12.

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise."—Psa. 100: 4.

THE Ark of the Covenant, wherein was deposited the tables of the Law, the basis of God's covenant with Israel, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the golden pot of manna, was the most sacred article of typical Israel's religious emblems. Its lid, consisting of a golden plate surmounted with two cherubs, constituted the mercy-seat—the meeting place between God and the officiating priest, who acted as mediator between God and the nation of Israel. When in the Tabernacle, the divine presence was manifested upon the mercy-seat between the cherubim by a miraculous light called the shekinah glory. For seventy years prior to our lesson the Ark had been neglected and in considerable degree the religion of the nation had likewise been neglected, though it is presumed that their devotions as individuals were not entirely forgotten, even as in David's case, we note his continued reliance upon the Lord and appeals to him.

It will be remembered that the Ark was in the Tabernacle of the Lord at Shiloh when Samuel was a boy and Eli was high priest, and that later, when the latter was aged and Samuel was grown, in a battle with the Philistines the sons of Eli, who were disreputable, selfseeking, grasping characters, took the Ark into battle as a talisman or mascot, believing that the Lord would protect the Ark and that thus the army of Israel with it would have success. But the iniquity of Eli's sons had reached its full and God willed that they should fall in the battle and that the Ark should be captured by the Philistines and that Eli himself should die of heart failure upon hearing the news of the disaster, and that Samuel should occupy the place of judge, prophet and priest to the Lord.

It will also be remembered that while the Ark was with the Philistines it brought them no blessing, but on the contrary sickness, trouble, etc., or "bad luck," as some would say. It was thus sent from one Philistine city to another, each being glad to get rid of it until finally they put it upon a cart and started it eastward to the land of Israel. There it was received by the priest Abinadab and lodged in his own house. There it had remained for several years up to the time of this lesson, when David had become King of Israel.

Fervent in Spirit

As we have already seen King David possessed a very deep religious nature, whose center or will had been early turned in full consecration to the Lord. Realizing that God was the real King of Israel and that he himself was merely God's vicegerent or representative, David sought to fulfil the divine will and arrangement by inaugurating the Tabernacle and its religious services, as God had appointed through Moses. Accordingly a royal decree went forth summoning the priests, Levites and tribal princes and religious people of the various parts of the dominion for the reinauguration of the public worship of Jehovah God. The scope of the decree may be judged from the assembled multitude—30,000. . . .

It matters not what motive David may have had in calling this convocation, because God was behind it and David, wittingly or unwittingly was being used as the divine agent in accomplishing the divine purposes. And it will surely do us good to call to mind that similarly the Lord has a special interest in all the matters which pertain to Spiritual Israel and that no great or important matters that pertain to Spiritual Zion take place without his notice, without his permission. Only those who thus recognize the divine supervision of the Church's interest can rest their hearts in faith and confidence or feel assured that God is working all things according to the counsel of his own will.

We feel specially impressed with the special evidences which show that God's supervision was particularly with Israel in their harvest time, at the end of the age, in all of the affairs pertaining to our Lord's first advent: his birth in the "fulness of time," his death "in due time," the number of his disciples, the one that should betray him, his crucifixion as a malefactor, the rejection of Israel because of the rejection of Messiah, the anointing of the "most holy" at Pentecost, the final overthrow of the nation, A.D. 70. And if we note such particular care by the Lord over natural Israel, may we not experience as much faith in his care for Spiritual Israel. . . .

The trials and difficulties of the Jewish harvest seemed like calamities at the moment of their permission, and it is only by hind-sight directed by the holy Spirit and prophetic Word that we are able to discern God's providences there. Similarly calamities, adversities, peculiar conditions, etc., are to be expected, which at the time of occurrence will not be understood by any except those of large faith and intimate acquaintance with the prophecies, and even they will be obliged to walk by faith and not by sight. It will be **afterward** that the divine supervision in every detail will be discernible. . . .

"Obedience Better Than Sacrifice"

The occasion of bringing the Ark of God to the capital city of the nation was to be gala day of rejoicing, long to be remembered from one end of Israel's land to the other. King David rejoiced at the unanimity of religious sentiment everywhere prevalent with the people who accepted his instructions. The players of musical instruments of every kind had been engaged so as to accompany the procession. An ox-cart, specially prepared, was provided and the Ark was put upon the cart and the two sons of the high-priest accompanied it, the one preceding and the other driving. The good intentions of all concerned are not to be misjudged, but a serious error was made in that the divine order in connection with the matter was neglected.

(1) God had made no such arrangement of transferring the Ark on a cart, however, honorable that may have seemed to David and to the priests.

(2) It was not the business of the priests at all to transfer the Ark, for, although they ranked high in the Lord's services, it was the Levites who were commissioned to bear the Ark by its staves on their shoulders. In neglecting these divine provisions

an opening was made for all kinds of irregularity in connection with the services of the Tabernacle, which the Lord designed should not be reinaugurated. It was proper that the king, the priests, the nobles of all the tribes and the religious people of the nation should have a lesson that would not soon be forgotten respecting the importance of carrying out every detail of the divine law in respect to the worship and services of the Tabernacle. The lesson which the Lord gave on this occasion not only was profitable to the king and the nation, but has been profitable in a large degree to Spiritual Israel during this Gospel Age.

When the time came for the manifestation of the Lord's disapproval of the neglect of the Law on the part of those who desired to honor him, the oxen stumbled and, to steady the Ark, Uzzah, an underpriest, put forth his hand, when immediately God's displeasure was manifested in his falling down dead. The gala day was suddenly spoiled. The joy of the king and of the people vanished. Instead came distress and fear—if because of some blunder even one of the priests should be thus smitten down of the Lord, what would be the dangers as respects others! King David promptly concluded that he dare not have the Ark with him and near his own house at Jerusalem, as previously intended. The procession stopped and, turning aside, the Ark was deposited in the home of Obed-edom.

"The Fear of the Lord Is the Beginning of Wisdom"

One of the first lessons necessary for every Israelite, natural and spiritual, is reverence. Without this quality we shall be sure to err. There is an old and true adage, "Familiarity breeds contempt," and this applies to religious things and to God, as well as to earthly things and to men. The worship of God, which King David was to inaugurate, must be founded upon a proper base of respect and reverence. It must be recognized as fundamental, that obedience is a pre-requisite to the offering of acceptable sacrifices to the Lord. . . .

Spiritual Israelites must learn this lesson—that in handling the holy things of the divine Word, the divine plan, the services of the Truth, the ministry of the Church of Christ, they are not at liberty to do as they please, merely assuring themselves that their motives are good. It is their duty to note carefully the divine will and to follow out the program in the order of the directions of the divine Word.

Furthermore it is for us to learn, too, that God designs that not all the services are to be performed by one or two persons, but that there is a part in the service of God for all of the consecrated and that each is to be granted the opportunity for such service, as the Lord has planned. Some may occupy the priestly service, which others may not enjoy, and some may occupy the Levite's service, and their opportunities are not to be taken from them. Again another important lesson to be learned by Spiritual Israelites is that God is guiding his own affairs; that he is as much interested in them as we are and more, too, and that he is fully capable of their management. Some of the Lord's people carry great burdens which do not belong to them and which hinder them from the rest and joy which otherwise might be theirs. Others are so active, so zealous, that they fancy that the work of God would not be accomplished at all unless they did it. The Lord wishes us to learn the important lesson, "In all thy ways acknowledge him," "and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart." Only by recognizing the Lord as first in every feature of his work and by recognizing ourselves as honored by him in every opportunity of service shall we be able to bring blessing to ourselves and to others.

Profiting By Experience

If we think of David's course in refusing to bring the Ark to Jerusalem, as at first intended, as a mark of petulance and anger against the Lord for spoiling the gala day, we shall make a great mistake. David's character was too reverential for anything of this kind. He was the man who could fight Goliath, but not the man who could fight against God. Every act of his life was marked by reverence and humility and a recognition of God's justice and power and love and of David's own humility in the Lord's sight. Meantime the Lord was teaching a great lesson to the whole nation, which heard of the sad disappointment of the people with reference to the great gala day and that God's displeasure was shown in such a striking way that even a priest was stricken down for neglect of the divine supervision, and that the Ark was now in the house of Obed-edom.

King David was watching, and noted these results, and again his heart went out longingly with the wish that the chief emblem of divine worship should rest under the shadow of the Lord, near to the Lord and to the shekinah glory. Evidently he made investigation as to the handling of the Ark and concluded that the mistake was that of himself and of the priests and that God's blessing and not a curse would go with the Ark. So at the end of three months he made arrangements afresh for the bringing of it to his capital. Again the visitors came, the bands of music in order, and the procession accompanied the Ark again towards Jerusalem. We read that David brought the Ark from the house of Obed-edom unto the city of David with gladness and with joy.

A description of the festival procession may be found in 1 Chron. 15 and16. It was decidedly the greatest day in David's career. But this time, in harmony with the lesson taught, there were no innovations, no cart driven by priests after the manner of the heathen, but instead a strict adherence to the divine direction. The Ark was borne on the shoulders of the Levites. The lesson was learned that obedience to the letter is better than sacrifice. In the joyous procession the king apparently led, playing upon the harp, while with him the singers and the musicians were divided into several companies which sang parts in alternation. See Psalms 105, 96, and 106. The 24th Psalm is supposed to have been sung as a marching accompaniment as the procession was entering Jerusalem, where a tent or tabernacle had already been placed for the reception of the Ark. Seven choirs formed part of the procession, according to Josephus.

Other Lessons for Spiritual Israel

Members of antitypical David,—the Christ—are to learn lessons from all the experiences of life; that purging out all the leaven of malice, envy, strife, hatred, evil speaking (incipient **murder**), and fill every corner and interstice of their nature, so far as possible, with the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of the truth, Love: and that when siftings or separations shall come, they take heed and be not deceived by the Adversary, who always will attempt to put darkness for light, and will not hesitate at misrepresentations, back-biting, evil speaking, slander, etc. And as the Adversary does not hesitate at these, neither do those who become, either knowingly or unknowingly, his agents and tools. Such seem to lose not only their self-respect and sense of propriety and justice and love of truth (which even the world and nominal Christians would have), but in their bitterness of spirit seem to give full testimony respecting which spirit it is that animates them. In these trials and siftings **we may be sure that only the one class will come off victors,** viz., those who abide under the shadow of the Almighty, trusting in the precious blood, and seeking in all things to be conformed to the image of the Lord, not only in their doctrines, but also in the acts of daily life, and in their words and thoughts. Remember the words of the Apostle Peter, respecting the necessity for putting on the graces of the spirit:—"If ye do these things ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

The duty of the faithful in every case is the same: to hold up the light—to manifest the spirit of the truth and to **refuse** to tolerate the evil—to reprove it by the Word of the Lord and in a spirit of love and gentle firmness. The sooner all who love evil—anger, malice, hatred, etc.—depart from those who delight to speak the truth in love, **the better.** As the Apostle suggests of this class —"They went out from us, because they were not all of us." Let not those who love the truth and have its spirit of love depart; but let them forget not the assembling of themselves together, and so much the more as they see the Day drawing on.

But nothing in the foregoing should be understood to advise the **forcing** of a breach, or carelessness as to who may "stumble." Quite to the contrary, true love of the brethren means patience, long suffering, gentleness, kindness,—willingness to yield to them and accommodate them in anything non-essential—in anything not opposed to the letter or spirit of the truth. For love and faithfulness to God alone takes precedence to love and faithfulness to the brethren. Each, therefore should not only sacrifice his own non-essential preferences (to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace), but more: the Apostle declares the proper measure of this love is willingness to "lay down our lives for the brethren."

Only after we have thus done **all in our power** to preserve unity along Scriptural lines and a rupture is unavoidable, may we regard it as a providential sifting from which good will result. And each should previously carefully and prayerfully scrutinize his own heart and conduct to make sure that not selfishness and vain-glory are ruling him, but only love. And when a rupture does occur, each should be careful to avoid any unkind words or acts and looks, which later on might be barriers to hinder the return of any who, seeing the error of their way, might subsequently desire to return to holy fellowship. And such returning ones should be most heartily and joyfully received:—"pulling them out of the fire," etc.

These "siftings" seem to emphasize the Master's words,—"Take heed that no man take thy crown." "Let us fear," as the Apostle suggests, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it by losing either the **faith** or the **spirit** of the truth: for the loss of either one means soon or later the loss also of the other. Z. '98:333-335.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

Is it not the same with all the Lord's true followers? Is not Satan desiring to have us to sift us, to hinder us, from being garnered amongst those who shortly will shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of the Father? (Matt. 14:43.) Assuredly this is the case, and our experiences today are in full accord with the testimony of the Scriptures that we are now in a very trying time—subject to the special temptations of the Adversary, but succored of the Lord in a special manner through his Word, through the brethren, through the various helpful instrumentalities which the Lord has provided for this time for those who look to Him for assistance and who are willing and glad to accept those aids which he proffers them. Yea, we see that we are living in that particular time which the Scriptures designate the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth. Rev. 3:10. Z. '07:28.

How important it is that we keep a close watch upon the desires of our HEARTS, and remember that out of the heart, out of the desires, proceed not only the good, kind, loving, generous sentiments, conceiving and bringing forth good deeds, kind words and proper conduct, but also out of the heart desires proceed the envyings and wrong and selfish ambitions which lead farther and farther away from the Lord and nearer and nearer to that condition which he would ultimately declare worthy of the Second Death. Z. '07:27-28.

The tests are now severe. We should expect it to be thus. These tests will grow in severity; but if we keep in mind the great reward which God has offered us, they will seem as nothing. As St. Paul puts it, These are but light afflictions and endure only for a moment, and are working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. 2. Cor. 4:17. Z. '17:263.

THE MEEKEST AND MOST ZEALOUS

It is not for us to decide the zeal and faithfulness of the apostles—to say which two would better fill these positions of chiefest honor. The Father will make no mistake. It will not surprise us, however, should we find the Apostle Paul in one of these two positions. His faithful, loving zeal and loyalty seem to shine out conspicuously even amongst those who were also faithful and loyal. It is not for us to have any ambitious feelings respecting this matter, except that we desire always to serve the Lord and be pleasing to Him, and eventually to be as close to Him as possible. Z. '04:139.

◆

The message which we have received into good and honest hearts is the Divinely appointed "meat in due season" intended for our strengthening. Our realization of the Lord's supervision of his own work helps to keep us humble in mind and in conduct. It also helps to keep us trustful, and looking to the Lord, and waiting on Him for direction in respect to the future. It hinders us from feeling that a great amount of responsibility rests upon us. It thus deters us from rushing in where angels fear to tread. Instead of feeling like Uzzah of old, that we must steady the Ark or otherwise everything would go wrong, we may have **fullest** confidence in God and his still greater interest in his work, and his wisdom as to how it should be conducted and his omnipotent power in making all things work together for the accomplishment of his own good purposes. Z. '09:249.

◆

The sin which cannot be forgiven, and which, therefore, must be expiated or punished before the sinner's repentance can be accepted, is that of blasphemy against the holy spirit, or **wilful opposition against that which is known to be holy and of divine appointment.** The spirit which instigates such conduct is that of treason against God, and those who manifest it in any degree are **in danger** of eternal condemnation — eternal death; for, according to Heb. 10:26-31; 6:4-8, wilful opposition, in the face of clear, full knowledge of the divine will, incurs that penalty. Consequently, every approach to such a treasonable spirit is **dangerous.** And a manifestation of any measure of that spirit is a sin which must be punished with stripes. (Luke 12:47, 48.) **Every sin against light increases the danger of going into the second or eternal death.** Z. '94:367.

◆

One of the greatest wonders, one of the greatest miracles, one that is more convincing to us than any other could be, is the change which the divine message has wrought in our own hearts—transforming us through the power of the holy Spirit. Not only do we see this transforming power at work in others, changing them from glory to glory and preparing them for the final glorious change of the First Resurrection, but additionally we experience it in our own hearts and appreciate the fact that the things that we once hated now we love, and the things we once loved now we hate. The poet gave the right thought here when he exclaimed, "I am a miracle of grace." Z. '05:29.

Blessed have been our eyes, for they have seen many of the "deep things" in the divine plan of the ages; and blessed have been our ears, for they have heard with wonderful clearness the lessons of the great Teacher—the words of glory, honor and immortality—words of eternal life. And now in the Lord's order we are to be ready for trials and siftings Now, again, offenses must needs come to prove all, and to turn back those who are not consecrated and those who have no **depth** of character, who are unwilling to bear the reproaches and afflictions of the Christ. So it was with Gideon's typical army. All who shall be owned of the Lord as joint-heirs with Christ must be a select class, a peculiarly zealous people;—and no wonder: Marvel not therefore at the fiery trials which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. In fact, that is the very purpose of the permission of offenses and divisions: "that they which are approved (by God, because they endure the tests and **STAND FAST** in the truth) may be made **MANIFEST** among you."—1 Cor. 11:18, 19. Z. '94:311.

◆

Results may sometimes be very disappointing as we find ourselves mistaken in our estimates; as we find some fall whom we had no doubt would **STAND** firmly with us to the end of the journey and enter the garner of the Kingdom. However, the work is the Lord's, and not ours. It is for us to do with our might what our hands find to do, and to leave all results in the Divine care, knowing that our Lord is too wise to err, and that his love for all of his dear people is far more intense than ours, and that nothing in their interest, for their correction in righteousness, etc., will be left undone. Z. '08:371.

◆

Once having been accepted in the Beloved, nothing but our own wills could change this relationship: the ill will of others could not do it; and as for our heavenly Bridegroom, like the Father, he changes not—he is faithful. Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus so long as our wills are actively enlisted with the Lord and his cause. Z. '98:108.

◆

"Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds" when attacked by the Adversary,—whoever may be his agents and whatever their missiles. He cannot harm but will only increase our reputation in the Lord's sight, if we endure faithfully; and he can do no outward harm that God cannot overrule for the good of his cause—though that good may sometimes mean "siftings" of chaff and tares from the wheat. Z. '98:85.

◆

The human mind is so constituted that it can by sophistry or false reasoning convince itself of error: hence the only safe position for any of us is to have absolutely no will or preference of our own, and thus to come to the Word of God free from all prejudice, intent simply upon knowing his will and plan: otherwise we are in constant danger of deceiving ourselves into whatever view we **prefer**; for "the heart is deceitful above all things." Z. '94:277.

Beware of evil workers: of those who go about to do evil, who have no bridle on their tongue, but who are given to evil-speaking and evil-surmisings which are improper. Indeed, evil surmising and evil speaking have become so common that very many professed children of God seem to think nothing of it; and little by little the habit grows, crowding out all spirituality: and thereby many are defiled and great reproach is brought upon the cause of Christ. Beware of all such evil workers: shun them as you would a pestilence: for it is a moral pestilence, most ruinous and fatal in its character. Our communications with such should be only to the extent of reproving, and, if that should fail, of exposing the evil work. The spirit that leads to slander is a murderous spirit, and should be recognized and dealt with accordingly. Z. '94:217.

◆

The Lord is still at the helm, still guiding; nor will he permit the matter to be taken out of his hands. Although Canaan has not been reached as yet, and although the journey has been a long and tedious one, with numerous trials and besetments, nevertheless, it has been accomplishing what God designed in the way of valuable lessons and experiences which his people could not do without, and yet be prepared for the inheritance promised. The Lord is at the helm in respect to the very smallest affairs which affect his Zion, that "he setteth up and he pulleth down," and that whosoever attempts to place himself in position in the Church, is violating the divine arrangement, as it is written, "Now God hath set the various members of the body as it hath pleased him." Whosoever, therefore, shall conspire in any manner to overthrow the divine arrangement, will be summarily dealt with by the antitypical Moses. Moreover, all who sympathize with those whom the Lord shall overthrow will be in danger also of dying the second death, because of being murmurers against the Lord and lacking of sympathy with his arrangements or providences. Z. '98:135.

◆

The Temple class, the "little flock," must be purged, cleansed: the money changers, and those who make merchandise of the sacrifices, must be driven out, before the Temple, composed of living stones, with Christ as its top-stone and foundation, shall be ready to be filled with the glory of God. Z. '98:128.

◆

Let us first of all **judge ourselves** lest we cast a stumbling block before others: let us fight down in our own hearts the wrong spirit which seeks to make mountains out of trifles and disposes us to be captious and contentious over littles and non-essentials. "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." Let us guard ourselves that our defense of the truth be not from motives of self glorification; but from love for the truth, love for the Lord and love for his people, the brethren. If love be the impelling spirit or motive, it will show itself accordingly, in loving, gentle, patient, humble efforts toward the fellow servants; and let us be "gentle toward all." Let "the sword of the spirit, the Word of God," which is quick and powerful, do all the cutting. Z. '98:87.

That upon which our faith should rest is not voices from heaven, either real or imaginary, nor the whisperings of a diseased imagination, but the sure Word of prophecy unto which we do well to take heed. Z. '94:62.

◆

Opposition and persecution are the inevitable concomitants of activity in the service of God, and they should be met with reason and candor; and when these fail of their purpose, then, with solemn warnings of the dangers of such a course, the wilful opposer should be left to pursue his own course. Z. '94:368.

◆

"Angels watch him on his way
And aid with kindly arm;
And Satan, seeking out his prey,
May hate, **but cannot harm.**
O, child of God; O, glory's heir;
How rich a lot is thine!"
—Z. '08:348.

◆

"My cup runneth over." Our Master's cup was one of suffering, ignominy, shame and death. We partake of it. It becomes our cup also; but he promises us a new cup of joy and rejoicing, which he will share with us fully in the Kingdom. That cup of joy and peace and divine favor and blessing our Master partook of by faith. And we now also have the same cup full to overflowing; but we cannot appreciate it fully until we shall be changed and made like our Head and share his glory. By faith we can enjoy it now and realize that it is full to overflowing. And our joys in the eternal future will be exceedingly and abundantly more than we could have asked or thought. Z. '08:348.

◆

We are in the time when each and all must expect to be specially tried and tested. And those who have only a partial understanding of the Divine Plan—those who have only a part of the provided armor, will find it difficult, if not impossible, to stand in this evil day the assaults of the world, the flesh and the Adversary. Z. '11:442.

◆

Keep **constantly** near you the thought and prayer, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." Z. '98:87.

◆

Do not trust your conscience. If it were a sufficient guide you would have no need of the Scriptures. The majority of people have as good as no conscience; for they are blind to the principles and laws of God given to guide conscience. And still worse off than these are those mentioned in 1 Tim. 4:2. Hence the imperative necessity for carefully heeding the Lord's Word, and walking **circumspectly** according to its light. Z. '98:87.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at Bellingham, Wash., January 30th, 31st and February 1st, 1920, in W. O. W. Hall, corner of Magnolia and Commercial Streets. Two meals will be served each day.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER TWENTY-SIX

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Conditions on Which One May Never Fall

IN view of the fact that we are in the testing time, when (in the Church) every man's faith and works are to be tested "so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3:15): in view of the fact that we are now in "the evil day" when the question is not so much, Who shall fall? but, "Who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:17) what shall we conclude respecting the conditions on which one may "never fall," but have an abundant entrance to the Kingdom now near at hand?—2 Pet. 1: 11.

Several conditions are laid down in the scriptures:

(1) All of the "brethren" will be awakened in season to put on "the whole armor of God" as in contrast with the small pieces of the armor worn by various denominations in the past—"in the night." Whoever shall be left asleep and in darkness and thus not prepared to "stand" in this evil day, will thereby make it evident, whatever his professions, that God who readeth the heart did not find him worthy of the light of present truth. "Light is sown for the righteous, gladness for the upright in heart."—Psa. 97:11.

(2) All once awakened must be sufficiently appreciative of the "marvelous light" to rejoice greatly therein. They must also take heed, lest they become over-charged and spiritually drowsy, by "the cares of this life," etc., and must use energy in putting on the whole armor of God — not only the "helmet" to protect the intellect from the "fiery darts," but also the "breastplate" of righteousness to protect the heart, and the "shield" of faith for use on all occasions as necessity demands; and besides these they must have the "sword" of the truth, the Word of the Lord—grasping it by the handle and not by the blade, that they may defend themselves and others in this conflict with the powers of darkness, with which this age ends. Lastly they must prepare for the rough pathway by putting on the "sandals" of full consecration to the Lord, even unto death.—Eph. 6:11-17.

(3) All such soldiers of the cross will be fiercely assaulted by the Adversary, and, to be able to stand, must "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

(4) One of the final and most searching tests of these "brethren," and the one under which probably the most of those once awakened and armed will fall, will be,—**love for the brethren.** Seemingly many will fail at this point and be therefore accounted unworthy of an abundant entrance to the Kingdom on this score. Whoever has the spirit of love according to the pattern (Rom. 8:29), is expected to agree with the Apostle Paul's statement,—"Because he laid down his life for us, we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren."—1 John 3: 14, 16; 1 Pet. 1:22; 3:8.

This, like all other tests, will be most pointed and conspicuous during this time of special privilege and special trial in the end of the age. (Rev. 3: 10.). Z. 99: 87-88.

Those who have not the matter at heart will naturally hate the others who, having the matter at heart, are as faithful as ever—because their faithfulness is a standing rebuke and evidence of the unfaithfulness of the other. And the faithful few, coming to realize that all were not Israel who were of Israel, will be drawn nearer to each other as they realize that after all the number of the faithful is extremely small. Z. 99: 270.

◇

We are more than ever convinced of the harmony of the times and seasons presented to our attention in God's Word, with the other features of the great Plan of the Ages therein portrayed.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh!"

Neglect not the assembling of yourselves together, and so much the more as ye see the day drawing on. Z. '93: 282.

◇

As an event shortly preceding his crucifixion, the cleansing of the temple finds its antitype in a similar work here, viz., the casting out (from the spiritual temple — his body, the consecrated Church) of such as are unworthy to be of that body, while the worthy ones, the pure in heart, are being correspondingly blessed.

The scourge of small cords was a fit emblem of the harmonious doctrines of Christ, which are accomplishing the cleansing work here. Z. '94: 272.

The moment when we feel self-confident is the dangerous one: the times when we feel our own weakness and are looking to the Lord for grace and help and guidance and strength, this is the time that by reason of his assistance we are strong. Z. '05: 349.

◇

What a beautiful example the Lord furnishes of Christian fortitude which never flinches nor hesitates, but with fixedness of purpose steadily pursues the appointed course of sacrifice! Z. '94: 256.

◇

Let patient endurance work faithfully in us. A few more days or weeks and our trials and testings will be over and we shall see his face. Be sober, be vigilant, be zealous. The Lord and his mighty angels look on to see us finish our race with joy and to encourage and assist us, and to cause that all things shall work out for our preparation for the Kingdom.

"How light our trials then will seem,
How short our pilgrim way,
The life of earth a fitful dream,
Dispelled by dawning day."

Z. '05: 376.

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OLD CORN GEMS

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"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18: 51.

Sons and Daughters of Consolation = Comfort =

"Joses, by the Apostles, was surnamed Barnabas, which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation [comfort]"—Acts. 4: 36.

COMFORT! Consolation! What rest and refreshment and peace and joy these words imply! That the name, "son of consolation," or comfort, should be given to any one of mature years tells a whole volume in itself respecting the general character of the person. We know little about Barnabas, but if this one sentence of holy writ comprised the sum of our knowleldge we could not fail to love and appreciate him.

In one sense of the word the Church is spoken of as a mother, Zion, and all the true people of God are thus represented as her children—sons and daughters. Some of these are sons of comfort and daughters of comfort, while others are sons and daughters of pain, continually causing more or less of distress and discomfort to others and to themselves. We want to see this subject in its true light, in order that we may each act accordingly:—that a larger and an increasing number of the children Zion shall be sons and daughters of comfort to all with whom they come in contact, and thus in a general way comforters to the Church as a whole. Some may be inclined to query, Does the true Church need comfort? Are not the majority too comfortable already? Do they not rather need to be stirred up, to be reminded of their sins, to be chided and made generally as uncomfortable as possible, to the intent that they may thus be helped onward and upward?

We would not ignore the fact that there are occasions when reproofs and corrections in righteousness are proper, as the Apostle advised. But we have no sympathy at all with the thought so common with some good people, viz., that they should always be feeling miserable with themselves and making other people miserable, by continually nagging and faultfinding, upbraiding and terrorizing. We believe that such well meant but mistaken efforts have done much harm, have driven away from the family circle of Zion many who could not, without hypocrisy, claim that they were the vilest of sinners, nor properly appreciate prayers in which they were represented as saying, "Lord, be merciful unto us, miserable sinners!" when they realized divine favor and forgiveness—justification from all things.

Those needing reproof, rebuke, etc., are such as are walking after the flesh and not after the Spirit—in violation of their covenant. Those who should be warned to flee from the wrath to come are such as have never yet fled for refuge to the hope set before them in the Gospel,—such as are without God, and have no hope in the world—no relationship to Christ, through faith and obedience. But the true "wheat," the true members of the body of Christ, the consecrated, are, however imperfectly, continually seeking to walk after the Spirit; though they are well aware that because of imperfections of the flesh they do not and cannot walk up to the spirit. These, instead of needing reproofs and rebukes and smitings and upbraidings for their shortcomings, which they admit and deplore and strive against, need sympathy, assistance, comfort.

Few probably have noticed to what extent the Scriptures administer this very "balm of Gilead" to the true children of Zion; but the Scriptures are full of comfort, and there is great need that all who are truly the Lord's people should see to it that they are more and more sons and daughters of comfort in the Church, administering to one another the helpfulness and encouragement and refreshment which the Lord intended. Our Lord spoke of the holy Spirit as the Comforter, and he mentions himself also as a Comforter, saying, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you **another** Comforter." (John 14:16.) To what extent our Lord Jesus was a Comforter we may judge as we look back to the three and a half years of his ministry, and at its close hear him say to his faithful ones, "I will not leave you comfortless"—orphans, bereaved of a caretaker. And as repects his care over the apostles while with them, we have a suggestion from his prayer to the Father, "Of those whom thou has given me I have lost none save the son of perdition," as the Scriptures foretold.—John 17:12.

It had been foretold of our Lord in advance through the prophets, that he would be a Comforter, as we read, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted: . . . to **comfort** all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."—Isa. 61:1-3.

All this means that our Lord Jesus was a Comforter in Zion above and beyond all other comforters. He entered into sympathy with the meek and lowly and right-intentioned in all of their weaknesses and trials and difficulties; and this is the hold that the character and words of Jesus have to day upon our hearts, and also upon the hearts of many who are not his people in the full consecrated sense. It was not by continually chiding the apostles, and accusing them, but because, instead, our Lord sympathized with them, assisted them, and interpreted their heart-intentions liberally, generously, that they became more and more his faithful followers, even unto death. Note the case of the woman taken in sin, and our Lord's failure to make any pharisaical tirade against her. Mark his reproof to those who stood by: "He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone." Mark how, when they were all thus convicted of imperfection in some particular themselves, our Lord said to the woman, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." (John 8:3-11.) Notice his dealing with the Apostle Peter, after he had denied him, cursing and swearing. Many of the Lord's followers, if in his stead, would have felt it their bounden duty to rebuke Peter publicly before all the apostles, and to have required public confession and some sort of penance; and on every possible occasion afterward to have thrown in his face his weakness and disloyalty. Such have not rightly interpreted and copied the Lord's spirit, and hence are not sons and daughters of consolation in the Church. They are, on the contrary, strife-breeders, vexatious hinderers of the work they desire to forward. They should hear the Master's voice, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." In proportion as we learn of the Lord we become, not mouthpieces for the Law merely, but mouthpieces specially for mercy and love and helpfulness and comfort.

So far as the record shows, our Lord did not once mention to Peter either his profanity or his disloyalty. Peter knew about these without being told; he had already wept over them; a mere word from the Lord in chiding, reproof, might have discouraged him,—perhaps hopelessly. The nearest thing to a reproof in our Lord's conduct and language was the inquiry, "Lovest thou me?" Let all who would be true sons and daughters of consolation in Zion learn this lesson from the great Teacher—not to strive to punish and correct and reprove and rebuke; but to avoid these so far as possible, and to inquire, not so much about the past as about the present—What is the offender's present attitude toward the Lord and toward his flock?

Comfort and Comforting Needful

It was with the full appreciation of the fact that the Church would need comfort rather than chiding and reproof that our Lord said, "If I go not away the Comforter (the holy Spirit) cannot come." The ransom must be paid, must be presented in the "Most Holy," to the heavenly Father, before his blessing could be bestowed. That blessing would yield the comfort of the begetting of the Spirit and the comfort of the exceeding great and precious promises to those who had accepted Jesus,—and to those who would believe on him through their word. True, our Lord spoke of the holy Spirit as reproving—but not as reproving the Church; he said, "He shall reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of a coming judgment." The nearest suggestion to reproof in respect to the holy Spirit's dealing with the Church is that given by the Apostle, when he says, Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." And again he says, "Quench not the Spirit."—Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19.

The grand provision made for the comfort of the Lord's people clearly indicates a necessity for such comfort; nor is this necessity difficult to find. The Lord's people are beset on every hand with adverse conditions—the world, the flesh, the adversary—seeking to intimidate or discourage or entrap the new creature, so as to hinder its development in grace, knowledge and love, and ultimately to hinder it from the attainment of the perfection and glory to follow, which God has promised to the faithful only. What we need, in order to make us sons and daughters of consolation in the Church, is a larger measure of love and sympathy in our hearts. In proportion as sympathy and love come in, they will crowd out the spirit of strife and contention and judging and fault-finding; even as they crowded out at first the spirit of the flesh,—anger, malice, hatred, strife, vain-glory.

As a rule (there probably are exceptions to all rules) those who have the spirit of helpfulness, of comfort, of consolation, and who are able to pour this balm into the wounded hearts of others most liberally, are those who themselves have passed through severe trials, difficulties, disciplines, and who have thus been touched with a feeling of the infirmities of our race, and, more than this, have been touched with a feeling of sympathy for the weaknesses and oppositions which assail the "brethren" in their endeavor to walk after the Spirit—not after the flesh. Those who have not "bowels of compassion," who have little of sympathy, little of desire to lend a helping hand to the weak or the stumbling or those who are out of the way, have much yet to learn respecting the real meaning of the word love, in its higher senses—perfect love, love for the brethren, yea, love that extends to all mankind, even to enemies, as it has opportunity, but "especially to the household of faith."

The holy Spirit comforts the Church in various ways. (1) It comforts us by enabling us to come into such unity with the Truth and with the Lord that we can to a considerable extent see matters not only from the divine standpoint but also can appreciate and feel from the same standpoint. For although the spirit of the Truth is in the Word of Truth, there is, nevertheless, a necessity that the eyes of our understanding should be opened, that we may be enabled to comprehend the Word of Truth; and this double comfort is ours through the possession of the holy Spirit,—in proportion as it abounds and is shed abroad in our hearts. It, of course, abounds and is shed abroad in the Word, but this is not sufficient. It must also be in our hearts a living power. Thus we read of the early Church, "Walking in the fear (reverence) of the Lord, and in the comfort of the holy Spirit."—Acts 9:31.

(2) It comforts us through the Scriptures, and through the promises of God, the Truth—for is it not the spirit of the Truth? The Word of God, as the channel of the Truth, is to comfort us in proportion as the holy Spirit guides us into an understanding of it; as we read, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning (instruction), that we through patience and **comfort of the Scriptures** might have hope."—Rom. 15:4.

(3) The Church, the brethren, in proportion as they become imbued with the holy Spirit and with the knowledge of the Truth, which it brings to their appreciation and comprehension, thereby become representatives of the holy Spirit in the Church—comforters. This is the thought of the Apostle when he says, "Now the God of patience and consolation (comfort) grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus."—Rom. 15:5.

Comforted and Taught to Be Comforters

Reversing the foregoing order, and considering the way in which the brethren are to comfort the Church, we note that it is as the channels of the holy Spirit, and as the mouthpieces of the Word of God. No one is competent to be a comforter unless he already has received comfort from God. So to speak, the Lord's people begin receiving their comfort from the time they accept the assurances of God's Word respecting his love and mercy, as exhibited in Christ Jesus, in that he died for our sins. In their appropriation of this divine favor to themselves by faith, they had their first taste of comfort—peace, joy, blessing. As they then proceeded and learned the way of the Lord more perfectly, the door of access into a still further grace was opened unto them—the grace of invitation to joint-heirship with Christ in the Kingdom, and its glorious work of comforting and uplifting mankind in general. (Rom. 5:2.) And as this door of favor was entered, additional comfort, additional joy, additional peace and blessing were added and understood and appreciated. And then, as the favored ones progressed under the ministries of the Truth, supplied by the holy Spirit, and became more and more able to rightly divide the Word of Truth, and to appreciate the different features of it, in the same proportion their faith grew stronger, and their comforts and joys multiplied through increasing and deepening knowledge of the Lord and of his plan.

Furthermore, as they behold in the glass of the divine Word the glory of the Lord, the reflected light of his glorious character illuminating their hearts and enabling them to comprehend with all saints the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the divine love, it brings still increasing confidence and comfort. And every one of these steps of progress, rightly received, and every additional element of character developed prepares the favored one for the exercise of his privilege of being a **comforter** to others. True, it was his duty and privilege to begin to comfort others as soon as he received the first elements of comfort himself, and to continue distributing the comforts as they came to him. Indeed, we know both from experience and from the Word that unless he thus made use of the favors and blessings, and showed his appreciation of the grace of God by shining it forth upon others, his light thus being obscured would grow dim and eventually be extinguished. But the point we wish to impress is that ability to be a comforter depends upon growth in grace and knowledge, for none but those who themselves are comforted can dispense this grace to others.

Notice the Apostle's exhortation on this subject, and along the lines just marked out. In his second letter to the Corinthians (1:3-7), he says, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all **comfort**; who **comforteth** us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to **comfort** them which are in any trouble by the **comfort** wherewith we ourselves are **comforted** of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation (**comfort**) also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted it is for your consolation (**comfort**) and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be **comforted**, it is for your consolation (**comfort**) and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings so shall ye be also of the consolation (**comfort**)."

Ten times in these verses does the Apostle use this word "comfort." He evidently had a keen appreciation of how much the Church needed such consolation, and how much the God of all comfort wished to have his faithful ones comforted, and how even the strongest in the Church, the apostles, needed comfort. What better evidence could we ask than that the spirit of comfort and of consolation, which the heavenly Father manifested, which the Lord Jesus manifested, which the apostles manifested and which all the faithful in Christ Jesus are called upon to exercise, is indeed the very Spirit of the Truth, the holy Spirit! Consequently, those who are making greatest progress in this direction, as comforters in Zion, are growing most in grace; and so we may be sure will be best able to grow also in knowledge, and to be helpful to the Church in every sense of the word, and to be used of the Lord as mouthpieces in the ministry of his Truth.

A little further along in the same epistle (7:4-13), the Apostle uses this word, "comfort," seven times, saying "I am filled with **comfort**; I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation. For when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless, God that **comforteth** those that are cast down, **comforted** us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation (**comfort**) wherewith he was **comforted** of you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoice the more. . . . Therefore, we were **comforted** in your **comfort**." Here we see illustrated, in the Apostle's language, the mutual helpfulness of the Church in this matter of comfort. Titus had a part in it, Paul had a part in it, the Church at Corinth had a part in it—every member possessing the holy Spirit and exercised by it had a share; and the Apostle declares that all this comfort was of God. And he expresses it as though this were God's general disposition, in every such circumstance of his people, when he speaks of him as "the God of all comfort," and "the God that comforteth them that are cast down." We may safely understand, therefore, that wherever we find one of the Lord's followers, however great his weakness, however much cast down, we have in his case presented to us an opportunity of serving the Lord, of being channels of his mercy, and carrying to the downcast one something of comfort and consolation and helpfulness.

Speaking respecting his own course, the Apostle, in his first letter to the Thessalonians (2:11), gives us a little insight to his methods, and shows us that he neither domineered nor tyrannized over the Church, nor continually harassed, threatened and upbraided them. On the contrary, he says, "Ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a (proper) father doth his children." This familiar spirit in the apostles, which enabled them as fathers and as brethren in the Church to comfort and assist, should be a guide now to all who would be servants of the Lord and helpful children of comfort—sons of consolation.

It is those who enter into this real Spirit of God, the real spirit of his Truth, who are thereby proportionately prepared to comprehend the meaning of the prophecies and revelations of the Lord which are hidden to the worldly wise,—hidden to all who have not the spirit of Christ, the spirit of consolation, of helpfulness, of sympathy, of love. Possibly this is one reason why so few of the professed expounders of the Word of God meet with any success in interpreting it; probably this is one reason why so many are in darkness. They have not received the spirit of comfort and love, and therefore cannot appreciate the loving, gracious plan which the Word of God upholds. It probably was not by accident that the Apostle, when stating that we are to "grow in grace and in knowledge," put the grace first.

We have seen what it is to have the comfort of the brethren through the holy Spirit; let us inquire now what it is to have "the comfort of the Scriptures," which we are enabled to comprehend by the possession of the holy spirit of comfort. We note again the prophetic statement of Isaiah (61:1), and that while this applied primarily to our Lord, the Head of the body, it must, therefore, necessarily also apply to every member of the body of the anointed. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon all the members, coming down to them from the Head, upon whom the holy oil of anointing was poured; and it must be true of every member as of the Head.—"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the good tidings: to bind up the broken-hearted (not to break hearts, but to heal the broken ones); to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

As it is not our commission to break men's hearts, even the worldly, hard-hearted ones, but to leave them for the Lord to break through various disciplines and judgments; so likewise it is not appointed unto us to comfort those who do not mourn; nor is it our commission to specially cause mourning that we may comfort it.

It is the wrong thought which some good people get, that the Lord's children in this present time should be gloomy, morose, sad,—mourners for sin. Whoever has heard the Gospel message has cause for rejoicing. When the Lord said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," he said it in the Jewish age—under the Law which condemned all imperfection, on account of which, therefore, all who were hungering and thirsting after righteousness and seeking to walk uprightly were necessarily in mourning for their sins, because of their inability to come up to the grand standard of the perfect law of God, and hence their inability to gain everlasting life under the conditions of that Law. The Apostle represented not only himself but all sincere Israelites, groaning under the Law, when he cried out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this dead body?" (Rom. 7:24.) He was mourning, and the Lord appointed that all the mourners in Zion should be comforted—comforted with the assurance that, while they were sinners and imperfect and could never justify themselves before God under the Law, nevertheless, God himself had found a ransom, had redeemed his people. It is in view of this comforting assurance of the Gospel that the Apostle, after representing himself as the Jew, under the Law, groaning and travailing, and crying for deliverance, in the next breath represents himself as the Christian who has found the deliverance, and exclaims, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" Shall the victors mourn, even though the victory be not entirely their own, but primarily bought with the precious blood of Christ? Nay, verily. We neither sorrow nor mourn, as do others, because of the good hope which is as an anchor to our souls, sure and steadfast—the hope of the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord's people, having embraced the Truth, find themselves beset on every hand with oppositions from the Evil One and his servants; and were it not that they have the comfort and consolation of the Scriptures, and the joy and peace which the world can neither give nor take away, theirs would be a sad lot indeed. But under conditions, as the Lord has arranged them, it is their privilege, even while suffering the loss of earthly things for righteousness' sake, to rejoice in tribulation, and in everything give thanks.

What is the secret of this rejoicing in tribulation?

Whence comes so great a comfort as this? We answer, it comes through the comfort of the Scriptures, made luminous by the holy Spirit.

Finally, we notice that the Apostle implies, in some of his statements, that the comfort and peace of the Church are dependent largely upon unity of the Spirit of the Lord in the various members: and that we from experience should note that this is the case. He says, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." (2 Cor. 13:11.) And again (Phil. 2:1, 2), "If there be any consolation (comfort) in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." What exhortations these are to unity, peace, brotherly kindness! How they suggest to us patience, forbearance, gentleness, helpfulness and **comfort** one toward another in the Church; that thus the Spirit of the Lord may abound in all, that each may make the greatest possible progress in the right way. **Dear brethren and sisters, let us more and more be worthy of the name Barnabas—Comforter of the brethren.** Let us have the holy Spirit abounding in us more and more, for this is the Lord's good pleasure; that with it dwelling in us richly we may be all sons and daughters of comfort in Zion, representatives of our Father, and channels of the holy Spirit, as well as of the Truth. Z. '04:291-296.

The Apostle Peter's Exhortation

"Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy."—I. Pet. 1: 13-16.

TO APPRECIATE the exhortations of the apostles, we need to become acquainted with their several characters; to note their circumstances; to mark their zeal and faithfulness; and to remember that every word of exhortation addressed to the Church has the substantial backing of their worthy examples. They endured hardness as good soldiers, and suffered much for the privilege of declaring the truth. In their writings are blended a high degree of the power of logic, eloquence and pathos, combined with an inspiring enthusiasm which must awaken in every student of their teachings a measure, at least, of the same sacred flame.

Though written so long ago, the above words of exhortation lose none of their force to us. They were penned for the instruction of the whole Church, down to the end of the age. The introductory, "Wherefore," refers us to the glorious hope of our high calling, and of the necessarily severe measures required to fit us for our exalted inheritance, as mentioned in the preceding verses. Peter would have us appreciate what it is to be called with such a high calling—to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith. (Verse 4.) He would have us know that, if faithful, we are to be made even "partakers of the divine nature," and that we are to be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, of all things.—2 Pet. 1:4.

As the spirit of God draws our hearts into closer fellowship and sympathy with the divine mind, the value of these exceeding great and precious promises" is more and more fully realized, until there glows in our hearts the same holy enthusiasm that so filled the hearts of the apostles. And only when our hearts are thus warmed and our minds thus awakened, are we prepared to understand the Apostle's "Wherefore," upon the inspiring comprehension of which depends our ability to heed the earnest exhortation which follows.

If our hearts are not duly inspired with this hope—if we have begun to esteem it lightly, or to forget it, or to think of it as an idle tale—to heed the counsel of Peter, here given, will be impossible. If, therefore, we realize that a spiritual lethargy has to any extent been creeping over us, imperceptibly benumbing our spiritual senses, so that the truth is losing its inspiring power upon us, our first duty is to betake ourselves to prayer and to communion with God and his Word, that its sanctifying power may be realized.

"**Wherefore,**" then, you that discern the prize of your high calling, and who are endeavoring to press along the line toward the mark, "gird up the loins of your mind"—as in the illustration: strengthen and fortify your purposes and efforts; renew your determination; redouble your diligence; cast aside the weights of unnecessary worldly cares; increase your zeal; and, as the Apostle Paul also urges, run with patience the race set before you. Run, not like one who is merely beating the air, but like one who has a purpose in view, and who, in desperate earnest, is **determined** to make his calling and election sure.—Heb. 12:1; 1 Cor. 9:26.

Having thus "girded up the loins of your mind" for a long, steady and determined effort, he further counsels,—"Be sober:" do not allow yourself to become excited and, under the spur of excitement, to exhaust all your spiritual vitality in a very short time, and then to suffer a relapse into coldness or discouragement; but thoughtfully to consider and prepare for a patient endurance of all the discipline and trial of faith and patience necessary to prove an overcomer and worthy of the blessed reward promised "to him that overcometh." The race is not one to be run by fits and starts, but by **"patient continuance** in well doing." Soberly, thoughtfully, we are to weigh and endeavor to realize the import of the exceeding great and precious promises and to gather from them their invigorating inspiration; earnestly we must apply our minds and hearts to the instruction of the inspired Word of God, availing ourselves also of such helps—of "pastors and teachers" and their literary productions—which prove harmonious with, and helpful to, the study of the Scriptures; diligently and patiently we must submit ourselves to all the transforming influences of divine grace and truth.

Such a sober view of the situation fortifies the mind against discouragement, and enables us, as the Apostle suggests, to "hope to the end for the grace to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Such a sober view keeps Reason on the throne of our minds. And Reason says, The divine call to joint-heirship with Christ clearly implies eligibility to the exalted office; the divine promise clearly insures divine grace to enable us to fulfil the conditions; the divine provision for my justification, by faith in the precious blood of Christ, releases me from the condemnation to death; and the righteousness of Christ, imputed to me by faith, fully supplements all my weaknesses, so that before God I stand approved in him. Sober Reason also says, **The directions given in the Scriptures are clear and explicit, and make plain every step of the way to those who are truly and fully consecrated to the Lord.** The examples of the Lord and the Apostles shine on the pathway with a moral luster and glory that cannot lead us astray. If we walk in their footprints we will assuredly reach the same goal.

Therefore in this sober view of our high calling and its privileges, and the abundant resources of divine grace, let us not be discouraged or overcome in any way, but let us hope to the end for the grace (favor) that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ—at his second advent. The Church has enjoyed much of the divine favor all through the age of her probation and trial; but the grace to be revealed at the revelation of Jesus Christ—when he comes to reign in power and great glory—is her exaltation with him to sit with him in his throne. This glorious consummation, the Church all through the age must steadily keep in view: but how glorious is the privilege of those of its members living in this end of the age, when already, even before our change into his glorious likeness—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye—we begin to enter the joys of our Lord.

Those who are still sober and faithful, and who have not cast away their confidence, have been led into the secret of the Master's presence; and they have been made to sit down to meat, and the Master himself has come forth and served them. Yes, our hearts have been made to burn within us while he has opened up the Scriptures and made us understand, from the testimony of the law and the prophets and the apostles, that the time is fulfilled—that the end of the age is now here; while he has opened up to us the treasures of divine wisdom and grace displayed in the plan of the ages, which God purposed before the foundation of the world, which he has been gradually working out in the ages past, and which is now nearing its glorious consummation.

Oh, what feasting, what rejoicing there has been around the table of the Lord, as one after another the treasures of divine grace have been opened to us, revealing the glories of the new heavens and the new earth, and the blessedness of all the obedient subjects of him who sitteth on the throne to reign in righteousness; how all tears shall be wiped from off all faces, and how the reproach of God's people is to be taken away! Well indeed did Daniel prophesy, saying, "Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred, thirty and five days!"—the days of the Lord's second presence, when all that is written to be accomplished by his glorious reign shall begin to come to pass.

Seeing, then, that such are our privileges and hopes, "what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and god-likeness?" (2 Pet. 3:11.) Being purified by this hope, ought we not, as the Apostle exhorts, to fashion ourselves, not according to the former lusts (desires and ambitions, which we had) in our ignorance, but as he who has called us is holy, should not we also be holy in all manner of conversation—in all our words and ways? Since it is written, "Be ye holy; for I [the Lord] am holy (1 Pet. 1:15, 16), should not we who are called to be partakers of his own nature and glory be holy also?

Some Christians have the erroneous idea that God does all the fashioning, and that his children are to be merely passive in his hand; but Peter does not so express it. He exhorts us to fashion ourselves according to the **divine** instructions. There is a work to be done in us and about us, and those who are not up and doing, but who passively sit and wait for the Lord to work miracles in their behalf, are greatly deceived and are giving the enemy great advantage over them which he will certainly use to bind them hand and foot and cast them into outer darkness, unless they bestir themselves to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, while God, co-operating with their earnest efforts, works in them, to will and to do his good pleasure. (Phil. 2:12, 13.) "Watch and pray," beloved, lest any of these snares of the enemy entrap you and beguile you of your reward. Z. '03:53-55.

"Do All In The Name of The Lord Jesus"

"Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."—Col. 3:17.

WHETHER he realizes it or not, each one who professes to be a Christian speaks and acts **in the name** of the Lord Jesus. The thought of our text therefore must be that we should endeavor to keep this fact continually before our minds, to the intent that our actions and words may properly represent our Lord and honor the name which he has permitted us to bear. Imagine a maiden from the lower strata of society married to a prince of royal blood. We can imagine a true wife under such circumstances extremely careful of her every word and action, seeking to have these as nearly as possible comport with her new station in life—her new relationship. We can well imagine that from the moment of her espousal the thought of her husband's high position and of her responsibility as his helpmate and family representative, would lead her to guard particularly her every action and word. From the time that she assumes his name, or acknowledges that she is espoused to him, whatever she does or says must of necessity be either to the credit or the discredit of his name. Elsewhere the Apostle wrote respecting the Lord's people, likening them to a "chaste virgin espoused to one husband, which is Christ;" hence this picture very accurately represents our present responsibilities to the great name which our heavenly Bridegroom has granted us permission to use as his espoused. What an honor to be his representatives in the world! and what a responsibility to bear his name!

Another scriptural illustration well represents the manner in which our words and conduct—good or bad—are all done in the name of the Lord Jesus from the time we formally confess him. The Apostle's words are, we are "ambassadors for Christ." (2 Cor. 5:20.) The United States appoints ambassadors or ministers of state to foreign countries. These are all supposed to be persons of good, reputable character before they are chosen, but we can well suppose that the most honorable and discreet amongst them, after realizing the dignity of such an appointment, would feel doubly impressed with the responsibility of his position. Previously he acted in his own name, and because of his own self-respect and personal love of justice, truth, honor, etc., he was careful of his words and conduct; but now he has not only the same personal responsibility but, additionally, an appreciation of the fact that the nation he represents will be either honored or dishonored by his course. If he were careful about his language and conduct before, his carefulness would be increased many fold. And then, because of his official position as the representative of a great nation, his words and actions would be more critically weighed than previously by those who know him to be the American ambassador; and we may be sure that morning, noon and night a realization of his position as representative of a great nation would be with him, prompting him to prudence. He would realize as never before that, whatsoever he said or did, all would be either to the credit or discredit of the nation whose general character and policy he represents—in whose name he speaks and acts.

If it is an honorable matter to represent one great civilized nation of earth before another, how much more honorable it is to represent the heavenly Kingdom and its King of kings and Lord of lords before the "children of this world." If we as Christians could keep this thought always prominent before our minds what a dignity it would add to our character! what a transforming power it would be! what an assistance to the new nature in its battle with the low and groveling tendencies of the old nature now disowned by us and reckoned dead! "Our citizenship is in heaven," says the Apostle. "Ye are not of this world, even as I am not of this world," says our Master, Jesus. While still living in the world we are not of it, but have transferred our allegiance and citizenship to the heavenly Kingdom,—set free through the merits of "him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood." And now as the appointees of our Kingdom, while still living in the world amongst aliens and strangers, we as representatives and ambassadors should feel both the dignity and the honor of the position and the weighty responsibilities, and ever keep in memory the Apostle's words, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Z. '04: 71-72.

Shall We Know Each Other There?

THE questions are frequently asked us, What knowledge of one another will there be in the next life? and Will there be communication between the heavenly and the earthly classes?

We reply that the acquaintance of the present time will be prolonged into the next life, and revive and increase. As for those who will attain the spirit plane of being, viz., the Bride, the overcoming class, and "the virgins, her companions, which follow her," otherwise in Scripture known as the "great company," all being upon the spirit plane will be able to see and know each other, because in those respects they will be alike, spirit beings. True, the Bride class, with her Lord Jesus and the Father, will all be on the divine plane, while the Great Company, like the angels, will be on a lower plane of spirit being. But all spirit beings may see and know and have intercourse with each other—those on the divine plane being superior not only in rank and position but also in that they will possess inherent life, immortality, while the others will possess a life that will be eternal because of its continuous supply.

The world of mankind will know each other as they do now—some by previous acquaintance and some by introduction. Thus, none of the ancient worthies who will be present as perfect men will be known by any of the world today, and they would need, therefore, some kind of introduction, either by divine miracles attesting them and their authority or by some other means. It may be easily enough imagined how the world will gain introduction one to the other, just as such introductions are now accomplished amongst men. Similar introductions will doubtless be necessary to the glorified saints beyond the vail, since the majority of them have never seen the Lord, the Apostles, nor each other.

Communications Between Spirits and Humans.

Coming now to the last feature, we answer that undoubtedly there will be communication between the heavenly and the earthly beings, not only throughout the Millennial age but subsequently. To our understanding the Father and the heavenly angels will have nothing to do with mankind during the Millennium, until the delivery up of the Kingdom of God's dear Son. But there will be communication between the Kingdom class, the Church, with Jesus at its head, and the world of mankind under their supervision and uplifting influences. Looking back into the past, we see that God communicated with Abraham, and numerous of his natural descendants, through spirit beings, who assumed human form for the purpose. But we are not to expect such manifestations in the future.

because we find in the divine arrangement a different preparation.

We find that the ancient worthies as a class have been prepared of God in advance to serve this very purpose; that they, rewarded with human perfection, might serve as the intermediaries between the spirit Kingdom and the world of mankind. As it is written, "The Law shall go forth from Mount Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The instruction will go from the spiritual Kingdom to the earthly princes, its representatives, and be communicated from these princes to all the families of the earth, with full power and authority in the name of the Kingdom to enforce every regulation, to reward the well-doers and to punish all who fail of obedience.

With the end of the Millennial age, wilful evildoers having been cut off in the Second Death, the world of mankind will be, like the angels, possessed of lasting life, and without sex. They will all be perfect men, like to and equal to the condition of the ancient worthies during the Millennium. When the Kingdom of Christ shall be delivered to the Father we believe that a similar communication will be established between the perfect men and the heavenly courts that was in vogue before the first disobedience and its penalty came upon men. True, we do not know very particularly about the character of the communion which prevailed in Edenic times, but it was sufficient for every purpose, we may be sure, and such will be the communion of the future between the perfect God and his earthly image, the perfect man—similar communion to that which during the Millennial age will take place between the glorified Church and its earthly representatives, the ancient worthies. Z. '04:346-347.

"Full of Mercy and Good Fruits"

We wonder to what extent the dear readers have sought to secure the wisdom to which our texts refer.

> "Wisdom is the Principal Thing:
> Therefore Get Wisdom."—Prov. 4:7
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> "The Wisdom that is from Above
> Is First Pure,
> Then Peaceable, Gentle, Easy of Entreatment,
> Full of Mercy and Good Fruits."—Jas. 3:17.

These heavenly counsels have been in the Lord's Word for centuries, they have been in our hands and before our eyes for years. We know them, we assent to them and yet how many—how few—seem to know how to apply them in the ordinary affairs of life. Surely as the Lord looks down upon us he must say, These people require line upon line, precept upon precept, instruction and repetition continually. Alas that it is so! We all might well be thoroughly discouraged were it not for the assurance we have that the Lord looks deeper than the outward conduct, that he is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and that according to what he sees to be our desires and efforts is his judgment respecting us. The thoughts and intents of our hearts are sometimes short of the standard that we ourselves approve, and O how short of any standard we could approve would be much of our conduct if we could but see ourselves as others see us and especially as the Lord sees us!

We are not writing with a view to discouraging any dear brother or sister who is painfully, laboriously, striving to climb up Zion's hill along the narrow way. On the contrary, we have nothing but sympathy for them, and are assured that the Lord regards both them and us compassionately—"he remembereth our frame, he knoweth that we are dust." The Lord recognizes that we are imperfect, fallen creatures, and he is not expecting perfection of us. He has made provision for the covering of such of our imperfections as we do not at heart assent to; he has also given us instruction respecting his will, and he is carefully scrutinizing us day by day to see to what extent our love for him and for the principles of righteousness, which he has enunciated and which we have acknowledged, are entering into and controlling the forces and conduct of our lives; for, after all, the words of our mouths are but the echoes of our hearts, and to whatever extent our hearts are clean our words will be pure, and to whatever extent our hearts are loving and gentle and kind our words and conduct will be in accord with these divinely approved qualities.

First Pure, Then Peaceable

Let us examine ourselves afresh to know the condition of our hearts, remembering the word of the Lord, that if we judge ourselves we would not require that he should judge us, but that if we neglect to judge ourselves he will chasten us, because we put our cause in his hand, because we are his. The word pure has in it the thought of innocent, without deceit; it has in it the thought of virtue and chastity; it contains the thought of clean, true and truthful. We cannot hope that any, either in the Church or out of it, are actually pure in the absolute sense of this word, but we do rejoice that our dear Master gave the key to a proper understanding of the matter when he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart." So long as we are in this present, mortal, imperfect condition absolute purity is impossible; for us to be pure of heart is possible—purity of intention, purity of motive.

When we begin a self-examination to see whether or not we are using our time and talents and influence wisely, this is the first point for scrutiny. Are we pure in heart, in our daily course of life? Are we sincere in the prayers that we utter to the Lord, in our endeavors to please him? In our relationship toward the Father are we candid and honest? Do we love him with a pure love, heartily, fervently, or do we not? Let each decide this point for himself before proceeding to the next. If upon examination we find that our hearts have not been pure in respect to our covenants and relationship to the Lord and his Word and to the Father, let us go no farther until we have asked divine forgiveness and resolve that by the Lord's assisting grace we will be nothing less than pure in heart, pure in endeavor.

If we can assure ourselves that our motives and intentions have nothing of selfishness connected with them, that our purposes are pure in the sight of the Lord, then, indeed, our hearts may rejoice whatever may have been our weaknesses and imperfections of the flesh, in our relationship toward the Lord or the Father or our neighbors or the world.

The next point is, Are we peaceable? Have we thus far in the year been seeking to cultivate peace, or, as the Scriptures put it, "Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"? Have we lived thus far in the year as peaceable, as pure of heart toward God and his Word and his brethren as is possible for us? If so we have cause for rejoicing afresh and being of good courage; if not, here is another lesson and opportunity for going to the throne of grace to acknowledge our fault, to pray for more of this wisdom from above, which is first pure and then so far as possible peaceable toward all—peace loving, peace disposed.

"Easy of Entreatment"

How has it been with us so far? Have we been hard-hearted, cold and repulsive, or have we been gentle, kind, sympathetic with those with whom we are in contact, easy to be entreated, willing, yes, anxious to do everything which in our judgments would seem to be in the interest and for the welfare of others—proper, reasonable and right to do? If so, happy are we, but let us not too hastily conclude, not too hastily congratulate ourselves along this line, until we have made close inspection of the pathway of the last six months. Have any appealed to us for forgiveness and been refused? If so ours is a very dangerous position. The Lord declares most positively that while that is our attitude we can expect no mercy from him. He insists upon this—"After this manner pray ye, Forgive us our trespasses as we also forgive those who trespass against us."

Emphasizing the matter, we remember that the Master explained, "Unless ye forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." What a thought! Do we need mercy? Do we need to have our faults and weaknesses of the flesh covered? Do we rejoice in the privilege of approaching the throne of heavenly grace to obtain mercy? Then, as a condition to those privileges and blessings, we must be in the attitude of heart where we not only will forgive those who trespass against us, but forgive them gladly, freely, heartily. Our Lord specially warns us against a forgiving with the lips which does not include a forgiving from the heart, saying, "Except ye shall from your hearts forgive," etc.—Matt. 18:35.

Let no one deceive himself—mercy is a prime essential to everyone who would be counted amongst the Lord's saints, and who would count himself as having any of the evidences of acceptance with the Lord to a participation in the glorious high calling. If we have been derelict in this matter in the past, let us be the more zealous now to correct matters, and the more on our guard as respects the future that we may not err farther in this same direction.

"Full of Mercy and Good Fruits"

Ah! Here we have the pith of the whole matter: Full of mercy does not signify that we are not wholly without mercy, merciless; nor does it signify that we should have a little tinge or coloring of mercy in connection with our thoughts, words and doings. On the contrary, it does mean that the Lord is very merciful. Love is his name, and that in proportion as we have received his spirit, in that proportion we are full of love and full of mercy. He that lacks mercy lacks the spirit of the Lord, as though when we read, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his," we should substitute the word mercy and say, **If any man have not mercy he is none of Christ's.** O, Merciful Lord, help us, we pray thee, that we may have more and more of thy spirit of compassion and sympathy and love, that we may more and more become copies of thy dear Son and thus copies of our Father whose mercy endureth forever, and obedient followers of him who said that unto seventy times seven we should be ready to fully and freely forgive from the heart those who transgress against us and repent!

Full of good fruits! It is a consolation that being filled with mercy does not mean that we shall be unable to contain the other graces, but rather that the fuller we are of mercy the more of the other graces of the Lord's spirit we may possess. Mercy is not one of the good fruits, although it is classed high. It is really a negative quality: it signifies merely that we do not resent the evils of others, that we are willing to forgive, to have compassion. Still more is necessary, we must also have the active traits of character that will reach out toward others, not to injure them, not to pull them down, not to slander him, not to backbite them, but to do them good. The fruits of the spirit of evil are anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife. Whoever finds any of these lurking anywhere in his heart should both labor and pray to have himself cleansed from the leaven of corruption that he might be completely filled with the fruits of the spirit, good fruits, meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering, brotherly kindness, love, that these things might be in him and abound.

If we have mercy towards a dear brother or sister who may have transgressed against us, we are not to feel boastful of the matter, but to realize that we also have been forgiven much and are objects of divine mercy, and we are to go on to cultivate in our hearts and to be filled with the other good fruits. We ought to learn to exercise patience toward a brother, to help him over his natural difficulties and weaknesses in a most kind, gentle, sympathetic manner, remembering ourselves also lest we should be tempted. We should be on the alert to exercise brotherly kindness, not merely toward those whose natural dispositions we admire because like or superior to our own; but rather our love for the Lord and love for the brethren should lead us to sacrifice our natural tastes and inclinations to some degree, that we might give aid and encouragement and assistance in the good way to those members of the body who are naturally less amiable or who have made less progress or whose weaknesses or shortcomings are more apparent.

This will be brotherly kindness, and it will also be God-likeness, for thus the Almighty and our Lord Jesus, while having the common fellowship with the holy in heaven, condescended to us and continually bow down to hear us, to sympathize with us and to assist us. Let us be more and more God-like then in our relationship and dealings with and toward each other, and finally these various elements of love will form in us more and more completely until, by the grace of God, eventually we shall be filled with his spirit, the spirit of love—until we shall have that perfect law in full control of all our words and thoughts and doings, and thus attaining let us **STAND FAST,** waiting for the glorious conditions of the first resurrection, which the Lord has promised to all such overcomers of the world and its spirit of sin and bitterness and evil. Z. '05: 230-232.

The Faithful and The Wise Steward

"Who then is the faithful and wise steward whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?"—Luke 12: 42.

THE implication seems to be that when the right time should come for understanding the parable, it would be clearly set forth: that at the time of the parable's fulfilment the Lord would appoint a servant in the household to bring these matters to the attention of all the servants, and that certain responsibilities would rest upon such a one respecting the dispatch of his duties. If faithfully performed a great blessing would be his reward, and if unfaithful to his charge severe penalties would be inflicted. The implication would be also that if faithful the servant would be continued in his service, and if unfaithful he would be dismissed and another take the position and its responsibilities.

We would naturally enough endeavor to interpret our Lord's words as signifying a composite steward— that is that a certain number or class of brethren together would constitute the steward of this parable. In endeavoring to make such an interpretation we are met with several difficulties, however.

(1) To suppose such a class in the Church would be to recognize what is elsewhere denied—to recognize a clerical or authoritative class as distinct and separate from the remainder of the Church, because this steward is to dispense the meat in due season to the household, to the fellow-servants. The Church of Christ, we hold, is not composed of clergy and laity, but "ye are all one in Christ Jesus, and one is your Master, even Christ." There would be no violation of principle, however, in supposing that the Lord at the time indicated would specially use one member of his Church as the channel or instrument through which he would send the appropriate messages, spiritual nourishment appropriate at that time; because at various times in the past the Lord has used individuals in such a manner. For instance, Peter used the "keys" of the Kingdom of heaven at Pentecost, and again at the home of Cornelius, and in both places he was used as a special servant in connection with the dispensing of special truths. This did not constitute Peter a lord over the other apostles or over the Church, but merely a servant.

(2) However much we might endeavor to apply this figure to the Lord's people collectively, the fact would still remain that the various items stated would not fit to a company of individuals. For instance, in the 42nd verse, in the common version it is rendered, **that** faithful steward! the revised version, **the** faithful steward; as though a particular one were meant and the term not used indefinitely for a number. Turning to the Greek text we find that the emphasis is there also and in double form—the faithful, the wise steward. If it were a case in which we could apply this text to Christ, there would be no difficulty, or if it were a case in which it could be applied to the whole body of Christ, there could be no difficulty, in harmonizing the one with the many members of the one body of Christ; but since the servant mentioned is to dispense food to the other members of the body, his fellow-servants, the term seems to be limited to some particular individual. However, just as we said of Peter, that he was not by reason of special use made a lord over the brethren, so we say of whoever is meant in this passage, that in no sense of the word would this constitute him a lord, or dictator or master, or imply his inspiration. All that we could say would be that it would be one who would be privileged to be a servant, and not many seem anxious to fill such a position in the true sense of the word. This servant, if found faithful, would be intrusted more and more with the distribution of **every** feature of Present Truth as represented in the parable, by his being given the dispensing of the food in due season to the household. Unfaithfulness on the part of this appointed one would mean his degradation from this service, and presumably the service would go on at the hands of another, his successor.

The expression, "Verily I say unto you, He shall make him ruler over all his goods," should not be understood to apply to future glories and honors, but merely to a more general charge or stewardship as respects the dispensing of the Lord's "goods" or truths due to be protected or disbursed during the remainder of this "harvest" time. In other words, the steward through whom the Lord will dispense Present Truth in this "harvest," will, if found vigilant, humble, faithful, be continued in the stewardship and be used of the Lord more and more in the service of the household—down to the close of the "harvest."

"Not as Lords Over God's Heritage."

That this servant must not act or be regarded as a lord is clearly indicated in the 45th verse, which shows that such a misuse of his appointment would work his downfall. At no time has the Church ever had need to be on guard against its servants who really endeavored to serve it and to hand forth from the Lord's treasure house the meat in due season. The Church's dangers have always arisen from those who sought to lord it over God's heritage, and to dispense their own wisdom or the wisdom of other men instead of the Word of the Lord.

Verses 47, 48, seem to imply that the servant's responsibility to the Lord will be in proportion to his knowledge of the Lord's will; and that the Lord will deal with him on the principle that having had much knowledge and opportunity, the requirements at his hands will be proportionately large.

While this exhortation in general seems to apply to one particular servant through whom the other servants are to be supplied (see Matt. 24:45-51), we can see that the same principles in a general sense would apply to each servant in turn, as he would receive either food or stewardship. His responsibility would be in proportion to what he received or had opportunity to receive, and to the manner in which he used the blessing. We of today, living under such great favor from the Lord, enjoying the light of Present Truth as we do, have every reason to give thanks and more and more to appreciate the things new and old from the Master's storehouse of Truth that he is now dispensing to us, and which each in turn is privileged to dispense to others and has responsibility for in proportion to his knowledge. The Lord help us each to be faithful, and to remember that our Lord was a servant as well as a Son, and that **our highest privilege as sons is to be faithful servants, stewards of the manifold grace of God.** Z. '04: 125-126.

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Since the holy spirit gave special warnings that in the end of the age "evil men and leaders astray" would wax more and more bold, and that through their instrumentality Satan would propagate error, and effect to be a messenger of light, is it not due time for all the sheep to recognize these facts, and not to be deceived by "feigned words" and "fair speeches"? The true sheep must not judge of fellow sheep by the pelt; for a wolf can wear a sheep's pelt: they must learn to note the Shepherd's voice and manner—directly through his Word. Z. '03: 38.

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What, then, should be the trend of the Christian's thoughts after he has reached the grand development already outlined by the Apostle? It should be toward things that are true, having no sympathy with anything that is false or even exaggerated. Whoever sympathizes with falsehood or exaggeration is more or less defiling himself. Z. '03: 9.

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There is nothing more dangerous than pride, whether it be manifested in a love of display or in ambitions to be great or to be thought well of by others. Z. '04: 87.

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Scriptures most emphatically teach the possibility, not of our stumbling as of accident, and being separated from the Lord, but of the possibility of our being separated from him through wilful disobedience and neglect of his Word and of the opportunities he has afforded us. He will not let us go so long as we are striving to walk in his way; but will order our steps so that they shall bring to us the best blessing possible, and will recover us and help us in our stumblings, because we are seeking and delighting to walk in his way. But if we lose this spirit, and become of a contrary one, if we fight against God,—if we resist the leadings and guidance which he has provided in his Word and by his spirit, and if we seek to walk contrary to him, he will also walk contrary to us, and he will let go our hand; our stumbling then would mean our fall. Z. '03: 71, 72.

It is **important** that all true Christians should STAND FAST and shoulder to shoulder defend the foundation principles upon which we stand—the rock foundation;—for "other (proper) foundation can no man lay." How our great Adversary would like to get the soldiers of the cross confused and separated, following different affinities. Z. '05: 359.

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The more the Lord's people shall be able to discern that we are already in the "evil day" mentioned by the Apostle, in which many shall stumble and fall from their **steadfastness** of faith, the more should they give earnest heed lest they should let slip the precious things of the divine Word, which is a lamp to their pathway, and through which God supplies the needed aids for walking the narrow way which leads to the Kingdom.—Eph. 6: 13; Heb. 2: 1; Psa. 119: 105. Z. '99: 248, 249.

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Those who build with obedience, their hearts as well as their tongues, confessing and honoring the Lord, their deeds corroborating their faith, and their fruits bearing testimony of their vital relationship with the Lord—these shall pass through all the storms of life and shall never be moved, never be shaken, because they are on the foundation. Z. '04: 46.

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And here he adds a caution which all would do well to heed, saying "But whosoever shall ensnare one of the least of these who believe in me, it would be better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were sunk in the depth of the sea." With what carefulness, then, should we regard one another.

Dearly beloved, bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ—the law of love; and so bind up the body of Christ that there be no schism in the body, but that it be more and more knit together in love. Let this blessed law of Christ rule more fully in all who have taken, by consecration, the name of Christ. Z. '05: 311.

The Apostle distinguishes between the filthiness of the flesh and that of the spirit, the outward and manifest filthiness and the inward and secret filthiness: and, while both are important works, the latter undoubtedly is the more important of the two—to be cleansed from the filthiness of the spirit, filthiness of the mind. This refers not only to licentious thoughts, but to evil thoughts and inclinations of every kind: hatred, malice, strife, revenge, backbiting, evil speaking, all these come under this head of filthiness of the spirit. The poor tongue that utters the bitter words and voices the animosities is merely the servant of the heart, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. If there were no bitterness in the heart how could the tongue shoot out arrows, even bitter words—especially against the righteous, against those who are seeking to walk in the Lord's ways, however imperfectly—against those whom the Lord has covered with the robe of His righteousness? The Lord grant us more and more of this cleansing of the Spirit, that we may be more and more filled with his spirit of love and sympathy and compassion, which does not readily impute evil but is full of mercy and good fruits. Z. '05:282.

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

The force of this proverb is greater to us who are spiritual Israelites than to any others in the world at any time, for by the grace of God we who have received the high calling have reached a position, a standing, never previously granted to any, and the higher the standing the more serious would be the fall, and the greater the blessing the more serious would be the loss by destruction. Let us, dear brethren, as those who have tasted of divine favor, as those who have been made recipients of so great blessings, let us walk humbly with the Lord; let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Let us remember that pride leads to destruction; that a haughty spirit, a domineering, self-satisfied disposition, tends to undermine the character, and ultimately to precipitate the haughty one from his vantage position into degradation, in some cases into death, the Second Death. Z. '04:188.

True love, begotten of the Spirit through the word of grace never grows cold but goes on increasing. Z. '04:185.

The end of this Gospel age is the time for separating the different flocks of sheep. In harmony with this, we now hear various voices calling the sheep in various directions, as never before. This is, in the Lord's providence, for the purpose of separating all others from his own "little flock." His sheep will hear his voice and follow him—other sheep, consecrated to human leaders, human institutions, human theories, human efforts, will follow their own bents, and thus be separated from the "little flock," and this is now the Lord's good pleasure. Thus he will "gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity," before the glorifying of his Church and the great time of trouble that will follow. Z. '00:231.

A son once asked his mother why she did not permit him to play with certain boys of the neighborhood. She replied that she feared their influence over him would be for evil. He inquired why she should not expect that his good example would influence these neighbor boys rather than that their example would influence him unfavorably. By way of illustrating her thought, she requested her son to bring her a tumbler full of clean water and a bottle of ink and a pen. When he had brought these she asked him to put a drop of the ink into the tumbler of water. He did so, and she asked him to notice the clouded effect that even a drop of the ink produced: and then suggested that he put one drop of the water into the ink bottle and note how little change would be manifested. The lesson is a good one: there is a corrupting power in evil, a downward tendency to which nothing in righteousness corresponds, and reversely. Z. '04:205.

However necessary that the stumbling-blocks shall be in the way, and that the Church, the body of Christ, shall be tested thereby, this does not lighten the responsibility of those who, as the agents of the Adversary, lend themselves to his influence in placing those stumbling blocks before the feet of the saints; and our Lord's words, without indicating exactly the nature of their punishment, assure us positively that such evil-doers will have a reward from him who says, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." Z. '00:206.

The Lord's true sheep, whom he knows by name and who follow him, will not heed the voice of strange shepherds, but will flee from them. They know when they hear a false voice, that it means that the Adversary is seeking to ensnare them; and such will flee from the voice of error that they may come the closer to the true Shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep. If, therefore, we see some whom we had supposed were of the Lord's flock heeding another voice and following after strange shepherds, and heedless of the voice that speaketh from heaven, we need not be fearful; for if they are true sheep of the Lord's flock they cannot long be deceived, if at all. We may indeed sound out the voice of the Good Shepherd, calling their attention afresh to the harmonies and beauties of the "voice from heaven," but if still they do not hear and heed, we may know that they do not belong to the flock which our Shepherd is now collecting and shepherding. Z. '00:231.

It is our duty to do all that we know how to do in proper self-defense and in protection of one another from the wiles of the Adversary and in the defense of the cause we serve; but, having done all in our power, having exercised all the wisdom and prudence we can command, we are to rest our hearts in the knowledge that the Lord will take care of all that is beyond our power to control, so that all things shall work together for good to them that love God. Z. '03:142.

Your life consisteth not in the abundance of the things you possess; you, beloved, are not dependent upon these earthly things; the Lord is the portion of your inheritance; yea, you have a goodly heritage. (Psa. 16:5, 6.) Z. '97:100.

The Scriptures point out to us that our comfort comes through fellowship with the heavenly Father and with our Lord Jesus: we are comforted, not by believing that they are ignorant of our weaknesses and shortcomings, nor that they have a low standard of righteousness and a sinful basis of fellowship, but quite to the contrary of all this, they comfort us with the assurance that although our every imperfection is known to the Lord he is yet very sympathetic, very merciful; and that having provided, in the great sacrifice at Calvary, a full propitiation (satisfaction) for all sins, the Lord is very pleased to apply, on behalf of each of his adopted children, in full measure, the riches of grace necessary to the covering and offsetting of every unintentional, unapproved error and failure. What comfort is here! What consolation! What privileges of fellowship with the Father and with the Son. Z. '00:214, 215.

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Blessed are the meek, for they shall stand. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." Z. '05:266.

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"I know mine own and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me and I know the Father." This intimacy of acquaintance, this fellowship divine, is something which cannot be explained to others, but which is certainly appreciated by all the true sheep who know the true Shepherd, and who have been, under his guiding care, led to the green pastures and still waters and also into the fold for safety. Z. '05:89.

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He who serves most and not he who lords it most should have the chief respect of the Lord's people. Z. '04:141.

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How solemn and weighty the admonition, and how worthy of the most thoughtful and prayerful consideration of all who name the name of Christ! The day of reckoning is upon the Church—upon all who profess to be members of it: "The hour of his judgment is come." Who is worthy to STAND? Only those who gratefully receive the message of divine truth, and who faithfully pay their vows to the Most High. Z. '05:313.

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The fruits of the Spirit are sometimes taken to be activities in the service of the Truth, as, for instance, the scattering of the Truth, the talking of the Truth, the bringing of some out of darkness into the light and knowledge of the Truth, the expenditure of money for the publishing of the Truth,—all these are sometimes considered the fruits which the Lord expects of the branches. Not so! The fruits are something still nobler and grander than these things, and are described by the Apostle as the fruits of the Spirit. The Spirit of the Vine must permeate all the branches, and the fruit of the Vine must be in every branch. These fruits of the Spirit are enumerated—meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering, brotherly kindness, love; if these things be in us and abound, says the Apostle, they make us to be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior. Z. '05:123.

Envy and hatred are set down in the Word of God as works of the flesh and of the devil, antagonistic to everything that is good and right and approved of the Lord. These are amongst things which the Apostle assures us must be rooted out of our hearts if we would ever be of the Kingdom class. Many unconsciously use false measures when judging of righteousness and unrighteousness: many who would roundly condemn in unmeasured terms the thief and the seducer, pass lightly over envy and hatred in their own hearts. From the divine standpoint matters are different, for hateful and atrocious as the former crimes are, they are the results of sin working in the mortal body, while envy and hatred are sins more of the mind and indicate a perversity of will, which is a far more serious matter every way than a perversity of the flesh. Thus the Scriptures tell us that God looketh upon the heart. It may be a new thought to some of the Lord's consecrated people who have long harbored more or less of envy and hatred, that their condition is really more reprehensible in the sight of the Lord than that of some who, while better in heart, are in public prisons because of wickednesses of their flesh. Z. '05:296.

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It is from the standpoint of victory over self-will—unto sanctification of spirit through obedience to the truth, that all the blessings and promises of the divine Word are ours in the fullest sense—"All things are yours, . . . whether things present, or things to come; . . . (for) ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." This is the graduating degree of the School of Christ, dearly beloved, in which we all seek to be approved. Let us unite our hearts and prayers, and above all our new wills, with each other's and with our Master's, to this end that we may be wholly sanctified and for the Master's use, present and prospective, made meet. "And the very God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."—Rom. 16:20.

Let our prayers every morning ascend to God,—"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer." (Psa. 19:14). And every evening let us review the day, judging our hearts (wills) by the Lord's law of perfect love—praying his forgiveness of shortcomings, and thanking our Lord for the strength and grace which brought its victories. Z. '99:6.

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"Wherefore," Christian brethren, "be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." We have before us the open book of the divine revelation, and never in the Church's history has God left His people without teachers—helps, index-fingers, to point His flock to the principles and precepts of His word, and to help them to compare scripture with scripture. But side by side with the true teachers there have always been the false; and side by side with the truth they place the error; and it is your individual Christian common sense that must decide the matter for yourself—"Prove all things and hold fast that which is good." "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another." Z. '95:53.

Helpful Thoughts From Volume Six

Do we sometimes feel that, although the Lord is for us, Satan and sin and our own weaknesses through heredity are all against us, seeking to ensnare and stumble us? Let us reflect that, the Almighty God being on our side, none of these oppositions need cause us fear or trepidation, for he is abundantly able to carry us through them all. Let us look back and note his favor toward us while we were yet sinners, in providing the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Let us reflect that if he would do all this for us as sinners he would do **much more** for us now we have become his children—now that we have heard his voice, that we have accepted his Son, that we are trusting in him and have been justified through his merit—now that we have heard the call to the divine nature and have made consecration, laying our little all upon the altar;—surely, much more would God favor us and do for us now, although we cannot think how he could do more than was represented in the gift of his Son. We may be sure that he who changes not still loves us, is still for us, and will use his power to cause all things to operate for our highest spiritual welfare and for our ultimate attainment of a place in the New Creation. Pages 183, 184.

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But few of the Lord's people realize to what extent they judge others, and that with a harshness which, if applied to them by the Lord, would surely bar them from the Kingdom. We might have feared that, under our Lord's liberal promise that we shall be judged as leniently as we judge others, the tendency would be to too much benevolence, too much mercy, and that "thinketh no evil" might be carried to an extreme. But no! All the forces of our fallen nature are **firmly** set in the opposite direction. It is more than eighteen centuries since our Lord made this generous proposal to judge us as leniently as we will judge others, and yet, how few could claim much mercy under that promise! It will be profitable for us to examine our proneness to judge others. Let us do so, prayerfully. Page 404.

◇

☞ Christian parents sometimes feel loth to leave their dear ones. . . . Such should realize that having given their all to the Lord, in accepting them the Lord accepted all of their proper interests; and that they may wisely commit to his loving care every earthly concern. As they more and more learn of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of love divine, and how ultimately the benefits of the great redemption shall extend to every member of Adam's race, they will gain the greater confidence and trust in the Lord in respect to their dear ones. Additionally, such should remember that they themselves, on the other side the veil, will have still as good an opportunity of watching over the interests of their loved ones as they now have, and a **much better** opportunity than now to exercise a protecting care over them. F Page 555.

Peter's description of this class is still more explicit. . . . He likens these to Balaam forsaking the ways of righteousness for earthly gain. His words imply that this class will be found principally amongst the teachers of the Church, and chiefly in the end of this age, and that part of their evil course will be to "speak evil of dignities"—of those whom God has honored and "set" in the body.—2 Pet. 2:1, 10. Page 166.

◇

"Love your enemies, do good to them that persecute you and hate you," is the Master's command; and not until we have attained to this degree of love—love even for enemies—are we to think for a moment that we have reached the **mark** which the Lord has set for us as his followers. Not until we have reached this position are we copies of God's dear Son. We must reach this climax of love **before** we can be counted worthy of a place in the New Creation, and we are not to expect that each one of the Lord's followers will reach this mark just at the moment of expiring in death. Quite the contrary. We are to expect to reach it as early as possible in our Christian experience, and then to remember the words of the Apostle, "Having done all—**STAND!**" (Eph. 6:13.) We require testings in love after we have reached the mark; and our exercises while at the mark—striving to maintain in our lives that mark or standard—will be very strengthening to our characters. Pages 189, 190.

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How can these New Creatures be without a law—without some regulations? We answer that the highest statement of the divine Law is Love. God's commands are so comprehensive, so searching, so dividing between the joints and the marrow, that they cannot be fulfilled in the complete, absolute sense except by Love. If we could suppose every item of the Law performed strictly, and yet the **spirit** of loving devotion to God absent, the divine Law would not be satisfied. On the contrary, Love is the fulfilling of the Law, and where Love reigns every item and every feature of the divine arrangement will be sought after and heartily obeyed to the best of the ability of the creature; not of constraint, but of joy, of **LOVE.** Page 367.

◇

As the head controls the body, thinks for it, plans for it, oversees its affairs and directs, or uses, one or another member of the body for the assistance of others, so does the Lord in his Church supervise and set the various members of the body as it pleases him; to such an extent overruling in respect to the interests of all those who are seeking to "make their calling and election sure," that they have his guarantee that so long as they are in this right attitude of heart, humble and faithful, "all things shall work together for good to them."—Pages 73, 74.

Old Corn Gems

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"Special Divine Providence"

"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."—Psa. 73:24.

THE psalmist says, "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over ALL his works." (Psa. 145:9.) This sweeping statement takes in the utmost bounds of the material universe and also the humblest, as well as the most exalted, sentient being. The whole creation is his care. Jehovah, our God, is the great Emperor of the whole universe, and his wisdom, power, goodness and benevolence are abundantly equal to all the responsibilities of so exalted an office. The human mind staggers in its efforts to comprehend the mental resources of a being who is able to assume and to bear such responsibility. Think for a moment of the memory that never fails; of the judgment that never errs; of the wisdom that plans for eternity without the possibility of failure, and that times that plan with unerring precision for the ages to come; of the power and skill which can harness even every opposing element, animate or inanimate, and make them all work together for the accomplishment of his grand designs; of the tireless vigilance that never ceases, nor seeks relief from the pressing cares of universal dominion—whose eye never sleeps, whose ear is ever open, and who is ever cognizant of all the necessities, and active in all the interests, of his broad domain.

Well has the Psalmist said, in consideration of the immensity and the minutiae of God's providence over all his works—"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it." (Psa. 139:6.) No, we cannot; but Oh, what a thrilling sense of mingled reverence, love and adoration fills the heart, when thus we catch a glimpse of the intellectual and moral glory and majesty of our God!

⁂

The providence of God over his sons, is a very particular providence:—All their steps are ordered of the Lord (Psa. 37:23); and the very hairs of their head are all numbered (Luke 12:7). His eyes are ever upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers. (1 Pet. 3:12.) All the angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to these heirs of salvation. (Heb. 1:14.) All things are made to work together for good to these, who love God and are called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28); and no good thing is withheld from them. (Psa. 84:11.) How wonderful and particular is this care; and they have the promise of it to the end of their trial state. God is indeed a Father to all that put their trust in him; but there is a wide difference between those who are his sons, and those who remain aliens, and even enemies. . .

The humble and believing children of God realize that, while they may not be able at all times to understand the Lord's ways in all his dealings, they can know of his wisdom, love and care, and that they can therefore trust him where they cannot trace him. We should not expect to be able always to comprehend the divine wisdom, which is so much beyond our own; yet we can often see it afterward. Sometimes his discipline may be severe and by no means easy to bear, yet "afterwards, it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness." After the bitter comes the sweet; so let us take the bitter patiently, and rejoice in hope of the sure fulfilment of all the exceeding great and precious promises to be realized in due time by those who patiently continue in well-doing—in submitting without reserve to the providence of God, to the guidance with His counsel. Z. '93:227-232.

DEEDS, NOT WORDS

"They do the least
 Who talk the most,
Whose good designs
 Are all their boast;
  Let words be few.

"They do the most
 Whose lives possess
The sterling stamp
 of righteousness;
  For deeds are true."—Z. '12:165.

◆

The degree of our devotion to the Lord will be indicated in the degree of our love for Him and His; and the degree of our love and devotion will be manifested by our activity in conquering self and its selfishness, in all its ramifications throughout the affairs of life, and bringing all our thoughts and talents, great or small, into active service, prompted by love to God and to His people. Z. '98:201.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

General Convention of Standfast Bible Students at Vancouver, B.C., March 26th to 28th. Further information will appear in Old Corn Gems, No. 28.

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MEMORIAL CELEBRATION

On Thursday, April 1st next, after 6 p.m., the beginning of the 14th day of Nisan, according to Jewish calculation, God's truly consecrated children who are following in the Master's footsteps and fully desirous of doing His will in the light of Present Truth, will celebrate the Memorial Supper. This season is especially sacred to Christians because it commemorates the death of the Lord Jesus and forcefully brings to mind that we are to die with Him as a part of His sacrificial Body—the Church.—Eph. 1:22, 23.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER TWENTY-SEVEN

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18:51.

"LOVE: MAKING A DIFFERENCE"

"Keep yourselves in the love of God . . . and of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire."—Jude 21-23.

WITH OUR MINDS all unbalanced through the fall, resulting from original sin,—though not all fallen exactly in the same direction,—it is not surprising that we frequently find ourselves and other brethren in Christ in more or less confusion respecting the application of certain principles laid down in the Word of God. For instance, we are instructed that love is the fulfilling of the divine law; and that love of the brethren is one of the evidences of our having passed from death unto life; and that if we love not our brother, whom we have seen, it is a sure evidence that we do not truly love our Heavenly Father, whom we have not seen. (Rom. 13:10; 1 John 3:14; 4:20.) In their endeavor to measure up to these requirements of the divine standard, some are in danger of erring in an opposite direction—in danger of manifesting a brotherly love where it should be withheld, and that in the interest of the brother. Let us note the different kinds, or degrees of love which the Heavenly Father exercises and manifests.

First, we have the love for the world. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" to die for us. (John 3:16.) Second, in a much higher and special sense, "The Father himself loveth you"—you who have accepted Jesus Christ as your Redeemer, and who, in his name and strength and merit have consecrated yourselves to him—you are seeking now to walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. (John 16:27.) But that this special love of God can be lost in part, or eventually wholly, is clearly set forth by the Apostle's statement, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." (Jude 21.) If any, after having tasted of the good Word of God, the powers of the world to come, and being made partakers of the holy spirit, etc., shall walk after the flesh and not after the spirit, we may be sure that such will proportionately lose the love of God:—and, if he persist in this course, as a result will ultimately be "none of his." For, instead of loving such, who through their knowledge and attainments and disobedient course have become wicked, the Lord declares that he is "angry with the wicked," and that "all the wicked will he destroy."—Psa. 7:11; 145:20; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-29.

As sons of the Highest, who are seeking to be like unto our Father in heaven, and like unto the copy which he has set before us in his dear Son, our Lord, we are to have for the world in general that broad sympathetic pity and mercy-love which would delight in doing any and everything possible to be done for their uplifting, in accord with the divine program, in the divine time and order. Like our Father and our Elder Brother, we are to love the brethren "with a pure heart, fervently"—with sincerity. This love for the brethren is nothing like the love for the world. It is not the pity-love, nor mere generosity. It is far more; it is brotherly love. All of the children of God are brethren, as new creatures; all these brethren have hopes, ambitions, interests and promises linked together in the Lord Jesus and in the heavenly Kingdom in which they hope to share. All these brethren are joint-heirs, fellow-heirs one with the other and with the Lord. They are partners; their interests are mutual and co-ordinating.

Additionally, they have a special mutual sympathy of compassion; for while, as new creatures, they are rich in divine favor and promises, they all have serious weaknesses, according to the flesh—draw-backs; although the Lord is not reckoning with them according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, the intention, the heart desires, nevertheless, they each and all have besetments arising from these weaknesses and imperfections of the earthly tabernacle, which cause them to "groan," and to sympathize one with the other in their groanings. As the Apostle says, "We which have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the deliverance of our **body**"—the complete Church. Thus the sons of God have a further mutual sympathy and love and care for each other, an interest in each other, helpfulness toward each other, which is entirely beyond and above and outside of any feelings which could possibly be appreciated by the world or exercised toward it;—because the world has no such conflict between the old nature and the new; no such covenant of sacrifice; no such acceptance in the Beloved; no such union of heart and purpose and aim and spirit. Oh, yes! the exhortation to love as brethren, fervently, is one which appeals to us specially.

But now we come to another point. Our love for the brethren cannot be exactly of the same measure and exactly of the same intensity or fervency toward all. There is something which guages or regulates it. What is it? It is that we love God and the glorious principles of righteousness, which are represented in his character; and we love our Lord Jesus from the same standpoint, as being the very exemplifications of all that is good, noble, true, just, generous, loving; and our love for the brethren must, of necessity, be in proportion as we find the brethren to be copies of our Lord. We do not mean copies in the flesh, but viewed from the Lord's standpoint; copies in spirit, copies in heart, copies in motive, copies in intention, copies in loving zeal for righteousness, truth, etc. Thus, as we grow in the love of God and in the love of Christ and in the love of the principles which they represent, we grow also in love toward all men and toward the brethren; but particularly toward those who are growing most in likeness to the Lord. This is not partiality; this is not doing to others different from what we should wish them to do to us. This is following the Lord Jesus' example; for we find that amongst his apostles, even, all of whom were chosen, there were three specially beloved; and of those three one is specially noted as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." He was specially loved, because he was specially lovable; and so with us and the brethren. We should love them all warmly, fervently, but of necessity with varying degrees of fervor, and the fervor should increase with each in proportion as we note his growth in heart-likeness to our Lord.

And if this be so, what shall we say of those who, after having come to a knowledge of the truth, and after having tasted and appreciated its goodness, fall away into sin?—of those who cease to walk after the spirit, and begin to walk after the flesh? Can our love for them burn with the same fervency as before? By no means; it should not do so. As the Apostle says in our text, we should make a **difference**. In doing so we are following the example of our Heavenly Father; for we have just noted that only by walking after the spirit can any of us keep ourselves in the love of God. Only by following the same course, therefore, should any be able to keep himself in the love of the brethren. Any deflection should bring corresponding loss of brotherly love and fellowship.

This making of a difference is really essential to the purity and progress of the Church. If we make no difference between those brethren who walk after the spirit and those who walk disorderly, or after the flesh, we are taking away the very premium and blessing which the Lord intended should go to those who walk after the spirit; and we are giving a premium, which the Lord did not intend should be given, to those who walk contrary to his Word, after the flesh. **It is as much our duty to withdraw fellowship from those who are unworthy of it as it is our duty to grant fellowship, and that with fervency, to those whom we see to be walking in the footsteps of Jesus.** We are not to think that it is love that is prompting us to take the wrong course of encouraging wrong-doers,—it is not love, but ignorance; and the remedy for ignorance is to learn of the Lord, from his Word and from his example.

The Apostle Paul calls our attention to our duty respecting the brethren, and how we should conduct ourselves toward them under varying circumstances, saying that faithful brethren should be esteemed very highly in love for their works' sake; that other brethren who are unruly should be warned; that those who are feeble in their mental comprehension of the truth should be strengthened; that those who are weak should be helped, supported; and that we should exercise patience toward all.—I. Thess. 5:12-14.

We are at present specially referring to the proper attitude to be observed toward unruly brethren—they are not to be treated as those who are esteemed very highly in love for their works; otherwise they would be encouraged in being unruly. On the contrary they are to be warned, cautioned, —in love, truly, and with patience, but not with marks of the same love and esteem as though they were walking orderly in the footsteps of Jesus and in harmony with the directions of his Word. The marks and evidences of our love and esteem must be sincere; and must be in proportion as we see in the brethren evidences of the right desires of heart,—to walk after the spirit of the truth. The Apostle Paul intimates how our disapproval ought to be shown, in cases which seem, in our judgment, to be of sufficient importance to demand a manifestation of disapproval.

Evidently the Apostle did not mean that the brethren should be watching each other for an occasion of fault-finding in every word and every act; but that, on the contrary, they should be so full of love one for the other that trivial matters would be entirely passed over, as merely of the weakness of the flesh, and not at all of intention, of the heart. The matters to be considered worthy of manifestations of disapproval and warning are, rather, those which are so open and manifest on the surface as to leave no room to question the fact that they are displeasing to the Lord, and injurious in their influence upon the brother or upon the household of faith. For instance, if the brother had been seen under the influence of liquor; if he had been heard to utter vile or otherwise improper language; if it were a matter of general knowledge that he was living in sin; these would be such grounds as we believe the Apostle had in mind. But evidently the Apostle had no intention of cultivating a spirit of fault-finding and judging one another as respects the heart and private affairs,—use of time or money, etc. These belong to our individual stewardship and none should endeavor to interfere with the proper liberties of conscience and conduct which the Lord has granted to each. The Apostle is very stringent in his condemnation of such judging of one another, which so often leads to roots of bitterness, misunderstanding, disfellowship, etc., and which , as the old leaven, should be purged out of our hearts and lives.—Rom. 14: 10, 13.

But now, for those who "obey not our word," the apostolic Scriptural directions in respect to their conduct, etc., is "note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." Nevertheless, knowing the tendency of the fallen mind to go from one extreme to another, either of too great leniency or of too great severity, the apostle continues, "Yet count him not an enemy, but admonish as a brother." (2 Thess. 3: 13-15.) To admonish as a brother does not mean to denounce roundly and severely; it means to admonish in a spirit of love, gentleness, meekness, patience, and with a sincere desire to help the brother to see the fault which we are certain exists, and which we are sure is not evil surmising on our part.

The Apostle John shows us that this matter of distinguishing as between brethren that are to be esteemed and brethren that are to be warned, appertains not merely to conduct but also to doctrinal matters. Yet we may be sure that he does not mean that we are to disfellowship a brother merely because of some differences of view on non-essential questions. We may be sure that he does mean his words to apply strictly and only to the fundamentals of the doctrine of Christ: for instance, faith in God; faith in Jesus as our Redeemer; faith in the promises of the divine Word. These will be marks of a "brother," if supported by Christian conduct, walking after the spirit of the truth;—even though the brother might have other views which would differ from ours in respect to certain features of the plan of God not so clearly and specifically set forth in the Scriptures. But for those whom we recognize as being doctrinally astray from the foundation principles of Christ, the Apostle intimates that very drastic measures are appropriate;—not persecutions, nor railing; not bitter and acrimonious disputes; not hatred, either open or secret; but a proper showing of our disfellowship with the false doctrines held and taught by them; a proper protection, so that our influence shall not be in any manner or degree used to uphold his denial of the fundamentals of the Gospel. This drastic course is outlined by the Apostle in these words: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine [confessing Christ to have come into the world, in the flesh, to redeem our race, etc.] receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds."—2 John 10, 11.

But, as our text intimates, we are to use discretion, judgment,—"and of some have compassion, making a difference." Some we may recognize as being merely entrapped of the Adversary, either in sin or in false doctrine, as the case may be, and not wilfully, intelligently, of their own volition. Toward such, still maintaining an attitude of firmness, we are nevertheless to express freely our trust that they are only temporarily wrong; and to seek to restore them, either doctrinally or in respect to their perverse moral course, to the position of fellowship with the Lord and with all the brethren who are in fellowship with him. Others we are to "save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." We may be obliged to speak very plainly to them; we may be obliged to tear open and expose before their eyes the sores of their own immoral course, showing them, as the case may be, the grossness of the sin or the grossness of the error in which they are involved; and doing so perhaps in strong language, if we realize that nothing short of this has availed to arouse them from their lethargy. In pulling them out of sin we are "pulling them out of the fire"—out of the Second Death—as the Apostle James says, speaking of this same class: "Let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death"—a brother who is a sinner, a brother, he explains, who has "erred from the truth."—James 5: 19, 20.

Finally, we remark that the dealing of the brethren with the disorderly is not to be in the nature of a punishment; for it is not with us to punish. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Our warnings or reproofs or withdrawals of fellowship, are to be merely in the nature of correctives, with a view, as the Apostle says, to the restoring of such an one. "Ye that are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted":—if not in the same manner, possibly in some other manner, in which you are weaker.—Gal. 6: 1.

As to what would be a sufficiency of evidence of repentance and reformation, each will require great wisdom and grace to determine. The heart in which brotherly love dwells richly, the heart which loves righteousness and hates iniquity, the heart which realizes its own imperfections, and that it is acceptable only through the Beloved—that heart will rejoice at the first evidences of contrition and repentance on the part of the disorderly brother. If very full of love, his heart may go out to him almost too quickly; he may need to restrain himself; especially if it be a second or a third offense of the kind, or the circumstances otherwise very grievous. It will be apparently his duty to look for works in harmony with the repentance, and to wait to see some demonstration, in the nature of restitution for wrong done, or such an open and radical change of conduct as will give evidence that the heart has returned to its loyalty to God, to the truth, and to righteousness.

The erring brother, truly repentant, will not be averse to giving such evidences, nor consider it unreasonable that his professed reformation shall be thus attested. Indeed, we may expect that such will feel so humbled in respect to his attitude, and the disgrace which he may have brought upon the cause, that he will feel disposed of himself, either to remain absent for a while from the company of the brethren, in penitence, or, if acceptable to their company, he will feel disposed to take a back seat—a very humble position amongst the brethren. And if the repentant offender had occupied the position of a leader in the company, humility on his part, no less than discretion on the part of the brethren, would seem to indicate that he should not be restored to any official or leading position in the congregation for a considerable time,—until ample evidence had been given of the sincerity of his reformation.

But we close as we began, by urging that facts, evil deeds or evil doctrines, and not evil surmisings, knowledge, and not rumors, are the bases of Scriptural disfellowship. Hence the necessity for the observance of the Lord's rule. (Matt. 18:-15.) While we are not to close our eyes to wrong in a brother, love will refuse to keep picking to find fault where none is openly apparent. And if fault is apparently discovered it is not to be "**discussed** among the brethren," but as the Lord directs should be taken **direct to the offender by the discoverer and not so much as mentioned to others unless offender refuse to hear;—refuses to correct the fault.** Oh, how much trouble would be saved, how many mistakes and heart-aches avoided if this rule were strictly followed! Z. '02: 197-200.

Purity is another quality to be esteemed by us. We are to love and cultivate that which is pure to such an extent that that which is impure will become painful to us, distressing, and we will desire to drop it from memory, and this will only be accomplished by continually thinking upon those things that are pure, and avoiding the giving of thought to the things that are impure. Z. '03:9.

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He who finds his heart not in harmony with this law of love—mercy, kindness, gentleness, goodness—lacks the evidence of proof that he is in any sense of the word accepted as a son of God, and a joint heir with Christ. If he have not this spirit of love, he will find it impossible to go far in the footsteps of the Master, for the sacrifice of Christ was not vain-glorious, not for outward show, not for honor of men, but prompted by love—toward God and men. So likewise with us, if we have not love in our hearts for the brethren, and the love of gentleness and benevolence toward all men, and even toward the brute creation, we have not the spirit which will carry us through in making the sacrifices necessary under present conditions. It will only be a question of time with such when the power of pride or vain-glory, holding them in the way of sacrifice, will snap asunder, and selfishness take full control. He who would be faithful even unto death, walking in the footsteps of the Master, must receive of the Master's spirit of love before he can thus follow Him. As the Apostle declares, "He that saith I love God, and hateth his brother, is a liar. He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" Hence, the Scriptures place the love of the brethren as one of the evidences of our having been begotten of the spirit, and of our being in touch with the Master. Z. '98:201.

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The Lord's followers will be kept because they are not of the world, because they have taken a positive stand on the Lord's side, because they have reckonedly died to the world and sin and been begotten again of the Holy Spirit to newness of life. They will be kept in the world, but not of it, by the power of the Truth in their hearts. The Truth will sanctify or separate them. Not any Truth, not all truth, but THE TRUTH—the Truth of the divine revelation respecting the divine character and the divine plan, and their relationship to these. Summing this all up, the Lord declares, "My Word is Truth"—the Truth which only sanctifies and separates my disciples from the world. Z. '05:137-138.

He who would continue to be taught of the Lord, must continue to listen for his voice, continue to be in the hearing and obeying attitude of heart. The difficulty with some apparently is that their own wills are not fully extinct, dead—that their consecration is not complete: hence while consecrated enough to wish not to disobey the Lord's voice, they have certain ideas of their own respecting what his voice should say, and they prefer to interpret his message in conformity to their own preferences: they will to do more or less their own wills, and will to hear the Lord's voice directing them in accordance with their own wills This is a most dangerous situation and is generally accompanied by self-conceit and self-assertion and will ultimately lead for from the Christian's goal. Let each of us resolve by the Lord's grace that we will out of honest heart continually seek to hear the pure Word of God, and that with a desire to obey it as far as we are able. Z. '02:362.

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We are struck with the modesty of our Lord Jesus in respect to the proclamation of Himself as the great Messenger of the Covenant. How beautiful a lowly mind is! And if it was beautiful and appropriate in our Lord, how much more appropriate it is for us who are His followers and who have nothing of ourselves—nothing that we have not received through Him. How appropriate the Apostle's words, when, after speaking of how Jesus humbled Himself to become a man, and to be obedient unto death, he exhorted us saying, "Humble YOURSELVES, therefore, brethren, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." Indeed, we may be sure that NONE will share with the Lord in His exaltation who do not learn at heart this lesson of humility. "The Lord abhorreth the proud but giveth grace to the humble." Z. '04: 92.

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It is difficult for us to realize how potent is our influence for either good or evil in matters which, unless carefully scrutinized, seem trifling. Careless words, spoken with scarcely a thought or in a moment of impatience, little grumblings, a sarcastic word, or laugh, or look, or shrug—oh, how these things count in our daily lives. Z. '16:119.

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"ENTERTAIN no thoughts which you would blush at in words." Z. Oct., '88:8.

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God puts great stress upon faith—not only upon a faith, but upon THE faith. Z. '92:287.

"Boast in The Lord"

"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exerciseth loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

"Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?" "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."—Jer. 9: 23, 24; 1 Cor. 1: 20, 31.

THINGS highly esteemed among men are wisdom, power and riches. But it is not the wisdom that cometh down from above, nor the power of godliness, nor the true heavenly riches that moth cannot destroy nor rust corrupt that is sought after by the world. Men of the world have not learned the value of these, and therefore they "spend their strength for naught, and their labor for that which satisfieth not." "The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" the faith that lays hold upon the might of the Lord is the beginning of power; and the poverty that freely surrenders all things to the will and service of God is the beginning of true riches. Worldly wisdom, which has not its foundation in the reverence of the Lord, tends to self-exaltation and pride; power in the hands of the ungodly tends to haughtiness and overbearing selfishness; and riches, among those who have not learned from God the responsibilities of stewardship, tend only to dwarf the soul, rendering it impervious to the noble sentiments of love and brotherly kindness.

The man who, by dint of labor and strife, succeeds in a measure in gaining one or all of these earthly prizes generally considers himself a wise man; for he does not realize how transient are the treasures, how unsatisfactory they will prove in the end, what snares are in them, nor how great is the value of the heavenly treasure which he has missed while grasping after fleeting earthly things.

To the worldly who have never known the treasures of divine grace these earthly things are of paramount importance; **but to the child of God, if possessed, they only increase the responsibilities of his stewardship**; for they are not his, but the Lord's, all being included in his consecration. Whatever he has of human learning—education—must be held in subservience to the wisdom of God. No human theories or philosophies that conflict with the Word of God may be entertained. A "Thus saith the Lord" must be the end of all controversy when human reasonings come in conflict with divine wisdom; for the wisdom of this world that arrays itself in opposition to the heavenly wisdom is "foolishness with God," and will by and by be brought to most ignominious humiliation. So also the human might that lifts its puny arm in defiance of Jehovah's power shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy, and the hoarded riches shall be scattered to the winds.

What folly is it then—especially for any one who has been enlightened by the truth, and made a child and heir of God—to forget the importance and value of the unseen heavenly treasure and turn to minding earthly things. For any to glory in such a course is to glory in their shame and folly. But let it not be so with us: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." "Let him glory in this," saith the Lord, "that he understandeth and knoweth me." "And this is life eternal," said Jesus, "that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."—John 17:3.

This is the knowledge that does not puff up, the wisdom that cometh down from above. The beginning of this wisdom is indeed the reverence of the Lord. Nor can we grow in this wisdom except by continued growth in the reverence of the Lord. If to any degree we cease to reverence supremely the Lord's words, or if we cease to cultivate his acquaintance through our privilege of communion and fellowship with him in prayer, in the study of his Word, meditation upon his glorious character and teachings, and in obedience to his will, to the extent of our neglect we fail to realize the blessings of that wisdom that cometh down from above.

But if, in the use of these privileges, we open our hearts to receive all that divine grace has in store for us, then, indeed, we may glory in the Lord. Let such a one "glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me." To thus know the Lord is not merely to know of him, to know something of his works and ways, **but it is to know him by that intimate fellowship and communion which, by a living faith, seals the testimonies of his Word upon our hearts and makes us to realize that they are ours personally, that the Lord himself is our personal friend and helper and counselor and guide.** We thus become acquainted with his spirit, his principles and methods of action,—we understand him,—we know how to interpret his providences, to mark his leadings, to observe his attitude toward us and thus daily to walk with him. Thus also we are led to a fuller appreciation of the Lord's righteousness and of his loving kindness, which will in due time establish justice in all the earth. Well, indeed, may we glory in the Lord and in the fact of his great condescension to us personally, when thus we come to understand and know him.

In this blessed sense of the divine love and care, we may say in the words of the Psalmist, "My soul shall **make her boast in the Lord.** I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints; for there is no want to them that fear him."—Psa. 34: 1-9.

How precious is this experience of the child of God! but **it can never be the experience of a proud heart;** "for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace [his favor] to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." (1 Pet. 5: 5, 6.) It is hard for those who are rich in the wisdom or power or wealth of this world to do this. (Matt. 19: 24-26.) It was hard for the scribes and Pharisees who were rich in titles and honors and praise of men; it was hard for the whole Jewish nation who were proud of being the seed of Abraham to whom pertained the promises of God; it was hard for the Greeks who were proud of their worldly wisdom and intellectual attainments; it was hard for the Romans who were proud of their power and prestige among the nations. **And it is hard today for all those who have pride in any thing.** It is hard for all religionists whose pride in the sectarian religious systems of Christendom blinds their eyes to the truth now due; it is hard also for those who boast in human philosophies and science, falsely so called; who are proud of being inventors of something new and strange, and who desire to be thought great and to lead men after them; it is hard for all those who reverence the opinions of men more than the words of the Lord. All those who either are rich or desire to be rich in the things of this present life, and specially those who are "rich" in a good opinion of themselves, or in self will, find it hard to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. Indeed, the Apostle intimates that the greatest battle of each one coming to a knowledge of the truth is along this line! for it is after pointing to the severe humiliation of our Lord Jesus that he says, "Wherefore, my beloved, work out your own salvation [in like manner] with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you [by this severe discipline, this humbling process] both to will and to do of his good pleasure."—Phil. 2:12, 13.

"Those who have endeavored in all sincerity to do so have always found the grace of God sufficient for them; but very few are ever disposed to make the attempt. To all the worldly-wise the preaching of the cross is foolishness, and they have no disposition to take up their cross daily and follow Christ.

It is for this reason that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" to share with the Lord in the glory of his Kingdom. They are generally so engrossed with the things of the present life—its pursuits, its cares, its pleasures, etc.—that they have no ear for the Lord's call. They are not humble enough even to hear the call; much less are they humble enough to obey it and to walk the narrow way of self-sacrifice in which the Lord leads.

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world [those who are not noted for worldly wisdom or influence or wealth] to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world [the humble poor], and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." (1 Cor. 1:26-29.) How truly the wise are being confounded today by the power of the truth in the hands of the humblest of God's consecrated children! Systems of error which are the growth of centuries are put to confusion and are tottering before it, and the sages of all the sects are troubled by it; for it is becoming more and more apparent to all men that "the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."—Isa. 29:14.

Why has God chosen these weak, inferior instruments for his great work? why does he not employ the eloquent tongues, the pens of ready writers, and the prestige of great names? Paul tells us why. It is in order "**that no flesh should glory in his presence.**" The great work of vanquishing sin and establishing righteousness in the earth is the Lord's work; no human power is adequate to the emergencies of the case. Yet God is pleased to allow his power to operate through any human instrument that is meet for his use; i.e., that can be used without injury to itself. If God were to work his wonders through those whose hearts are inclined to pride, that pride would grow, and would arrogate to self the glory that belongs to God, instead of appreciating the honor of being a servant of God, an instrument in his mighty hand—"for the Master's use made meet."

The Lord's use of even the weakest instruments, of those having even a very small measure of talent for his service, sometimes proves an exaltation too great, and that which was a blessing becomes a curse through pride and vain-glory. Such is the perversity of human nature, and such the subtlety of the Adversary in gaining the advantage, that the very texts above cited sometimes become a stumbling-block to many who are not only poor financially, but who are deficient in intellect and education, and who even lack instruction in the divine Word. They forget that the Lord said, "Blessed are ye poor [i.e., those who were poor (or became so) as his disciples]" (Luke 6:20); or, as Matthew (5:3) records it, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." And they forget that the ignorant as well as the learned, the poor as well as the rich, can become "puffed up in their fleshly mind." It is sad to see "a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing" (Gal. 6:3), thus deceiving himself,—but specially so, when even the rudiments of education and Christlikeness are lacking. We believe that modesty and simplicity are traits to be cultivated by rich and poor alike, who are blessed with a knowledge of the truth, and that any "confounding of the mighty" should be done kindly and in meekness (Eph. 4:2; 2 Tim. 2:25), and not in a combative spirit or with a show of gratification over their defeat.

Above almost every thing else, therefore, beloved, let us guard well our humility. It is only when we are little in our own eyes that God can use us with safety to ourselves. And yet he does not shield us from every test of fidelity. If therefore the Lord gives you a little exaltation today, a little encouragement of success in his service, receive it humbly, meekly remembering your own unworthiness and insufficiency except as God is pleased to work through you; and be just as ready to receive the humiliations of tomorrow as necessary for your discipline and the proper balancing of your character. If the success of yesterday makes you fret under the humiliation of today, then beware: you are not as roundly developed spiritually as you should be. Whatever may be the triumphs of the truth through us, let us always remember that we are among "the things that are not." Let us endeavor therefore to make the Apostle Paul's experience our own, who said,—"I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed, both to be full, and to be hungry, and to abound and to suffer need. I can do all [these] things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—Phil. 4:11-13.

In God's dealings with his people at all times we can see his care in guarding them against pride and self-sufficiency. If he would choose Israel to be his peculiar people, he permits them first to be enslaved for four hundred years, and then with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm he gathers them to the promised land. Moses, too, the chosen deliverer, was of humble birth. He was slow of speech, and needed Aaron to supplement this weakness. And Paul had his "thorn in the flesh," from which the Lord was not pleased to deliver him, though thrice he besought the Lord to remove it; and the Lord said unto him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness [i.e., my strength, operating through this imperfect earthen vessel, will be more manifest to men than if the vessel were a perfect and polished one. In that case men might ascribe the greatness of the work to the talent of Paul, and by and by conclude that since Paul is only a man it is only presumption for him to assume to teach other men, etc. But if the power is seen to be of God, and merely working through Paul as a ready instrument—meek, willing and energetic—then the testimony of the grace of God will be weighty with them: and so it was]."

To this explanation and assurance from the Lord Paul meekly replied, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."—2 Cor. 12:8, 9.

The Lord with unerring wisdom has always chosen the meek for every great work. Moses was the meekest man in all the earth. (Num. 12:3.) Meekness was a marked characteristic of all the prophets and ancient worthies. The Lord Jesus was meek and lowly of heart (Matt. 11:29), who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. He was of humble birth, born in a manger and reared in the despised town of Nazareth, that he might be called a Nazarene. The twelve apostles were all plain men, mostly fishermen; and so also the whole Gospel Church—not the church nominal, but the true ones written in heaven—have generally been the poor of this world, who were willing to be humbled yet more and more, that the power of Christ might be manifested through them.

Let every one therefore humble himself under the mighty hand of God. This is not the time for exaltation, but for humiliation and trial. The exaltation will come in due time to the faithful. Let our present glory be in that we understand and know the Lord, and in that he condescends to make use of these poor earthen vessels in his service, that it may be manifest to all men that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of men.—2 Cor. 4:7. Z. '96:17-20.

"He Giveth Quietness"

"WHEN he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" And who but he, the 'God of all comfort,' can give quietness in the midst of tumults which rise upon the soul like sudden storms upon the sea? Like ocean mariners in peril, we cry unto him, and he bringeth us to the desired haven—blessed haven—of quietness and peace in God.

What is the cry which brings this answer of peace? It is not a prayer that all occasion for disturbance shall be removed, for it is not always the divine will to bring peace to the human spirit in that way; it is not always the best way. But there is a cry which never fails to bring the quietness in which none can "make trouble." It is a prayer for sweet, trustful, loving acquiescence in the will of God.

"May thy will, not mine, be done;
May thy will and mine be one;
Peace I ask—but peace must be,
Lord, in being one with Thee."

What is it which disturbs my spirit? Is it anxiety about my work, my finances, my reputation, my friends? Suppose my Father in heaven should hear my prayer and remove every apparent cause for unrest in regard to one or all of these matters today. That would not give settled peace, for in a life so full of uncertainties as this, new occasions of anxiety would probably arise tomorrow.

But if I say, 'Lord, let each one of these matters which concern my peace of mind so closely be under thy control; order all entirely according to thy will, for thou art my Father and my Friend; thy will is that thy children should have the very best in all things; and thou knowest what is best for me," what a place of rest is that! How the sense of too heavy responsibility rolls off: how the distracting care is shifted from the heart too weak to bear it to the strong shoulder upon which the government of all things rightfully and easily rests.

If this experience of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price, is not realized at once, we must not be discouraged. It is not only of a great price as to value, but it often costs a great price to gain it.

It follows successive battles, often repeated self-surrender, and multiplied trials in which the unfailing care and love of God have been clearly manifested. We were watching the sea waves under the northeast wind; how disturbed and dark they were! Suddenly, with a fierceness that seemed cruel, the rain fell in torrents, and the unresisting waters grew perfectly calm as under an overwhelming surprise. When the storm had passed, the setting sun shone gloriously, and the quieted waters were beautiful in colors of rose and gold.

Nature has its spiritual correspondences. Surprise comes upon surprise, sudden, overwhelming. The spirit which once tossed restlessly in chafing winds of lesser trials sinks in sweet submission under heavier griefs. We learn that even in the storm God was, and at last his conscious love, his abiding presence, his unvarying peace—the beauty of Godlikeness—glorify the character and life. Z. '96:259-260.

None will be amongst the elect except those who in their hearts at least are noble, true and good. Z. '98:183.

Perfume Very Precious

John 12:1-11.

"She hath done what she could."—Mark 14: 8.

IT WAS Saturday night, as we reckon it, the evening following the Jewish Sabbath day—after six p.m.—that Jesus and his disciples and Lazarus, whom he had previously awakened from the sleep of death, with some other friends of the family, sat down to a feast prepared in special honor of Jesus at the home of his friends, where he was always welcome and where he stopped more frequently than at any other house during the period of his ministry, so far as the records show. It was at Bethany, the home of Lazarus and Martha and Mary. It was called the house of Simon the leper, one supposition being that Simon was the father of the family, and another that he was the husband of Martha, who at this time was a widow.

Our Lord and his disciples were en route for Jerusalem, and Bethany was on the way, in the suburbs. They probably arrived on what would correspond to our Friday, or the Jewish sixth day of the week. Expecting them, Martha and Mary had provided quite a sumptuous feast, and, in harmony with the Jewish rules governing in such cases, the dishes were evidently prepared in advance, as Sabbath labor was prohibited. No account is given us of that Sabbath day at Bethany, but we can well imagine the delightful social intercourse between the dear members of that family and the Lord and his chosen apostles.

Jesus in Social Life

The Master's words of wisdom and love are not recorded, but we know on the best of authority that a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Hence we may know that the day was not given over to frivolity of word or conduct, but to rest, spiritual enjoyment, which minister to the refreshment of all in the right attitude of heart. The same rule applies to all of the Lord's followers wherever they may be, whatever may be their vocation or surroundings. Out of the good treasure of their hearts they can bring forth nothing else but good things, and if any be otherwise minded let him beware, and correct the difficulty of the heart and not merely of the head.

We can imagine better than we can portray the loving sentiments of Lazarus and his sisters toward Jesus, the one they esteemed so highly, the one who, by calling Lazarus forth from the tomb, had demonstrated his Messiahship and that in him was the resurrection and the life power. This was probably the first visit the Lord had made to the Bethany home since that great event.

Apparently our Lord had friends in various walks of life; a few were rich, some were poor, some in moderate circumstances. The Bethany household was apparently of a comfortable class, as was evidenced by the fact that they had their own home, that they had their own tomb, and that on this occasion Mary was able as well as willing to spend a considerable sum of money in doing honor to the Lord by anointing him with the very precious spikenard.

"She Hath Done What She Could"

The use of such expensive perfumes was very rare: indeed, even the emperors used it sparingly, but when used it was generally poured upon the head. Mary followed this custom in pouring it upon the Lord's head, as Matthew and Mark recount; but having done this, she proceeded to his feet and anointed them with the perfume, and then wiped his feet with the long tresses of her hair. What a picture of loving devotion is here given us! The feet, always recognized as the humblest and lowest members of the human frame—the hair of the head, especially of woman, always recognized as a special treasure and glory to her—here thus brought together in a way which signified that Mary esteemed her Lord and Master as infinitely above and beyond her. She had recognized him first as the most wonderful of men, speaking as never man spake; she had come afterwards to understand that he was a great teacher, especially sent at a special time; and finally, through the awakening of Lazarus from the sleep of death, she had evidence that the power of the Almighty was in him, that he was none other than the Son of God, and she appropriately did him the reverence due to his exalted station.

She could not put him on the throne of earth, but she would show that she was his devoted servant forever; she could not glorify him before all the people of Israel, but she could glorify and honor him in her own home; she could not tell his praises and sing his worth, but she could sing and make melody in her own heart, and pour upon him a perfume which not only filled her home with its sweet savor, but which has yielded a tender fragrance to the honor of womankind in general from her day to the present time. "She hath done what she could," said the Lord—she has shown her devotion to the best of her ability. How true the remainder of our Lord's prophecy on the subject, "Wherever this Gospel is preached, this thing shall be told as a memorial of her." A sweet memorial of a sweet character and loving heart. Considered in the light of the odor and blessing and refreshment which it has shed upon all of the Lord's people throughout this Gospel age, Mary's alabaster jar of precious perfume, very costly, has proven to be extremely cheap.

"Might Have Been Given to the Poor"

Our lesson says that Judas protested against such a waste of money, and explains that it was not because he cared so much for the poor, as that he was a thief and regretted that the amount spent for the perfume had not been handed to him as the treasurer for the group of disciples, so that he might have misappropriated it to himself. This thought is more particularly shown in the revised version, which renders it, "He was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein."

"Me Ye Have Not Always"

The opportunity for honoring the Lord was limited—a little while and his sufferings would be ended and he would be glorified, beyond the evil, beyond the power of human attention. It was appropriate then, when viewed from the right standpoint, that Mary should spend a great price upon her Lord—that the head upon which fell the slanders and anathemas of the chief priests and doctors of divinity of that day, and upon which shortly the crown of thorns would be placed, should now be honored by one amongst a few of those who realized his true worth, his true grandeur, his Kingship, that he was indeed the Son of God. It was appropriate, too, that those feet which had trodden the valleys and hillsides of Palestine, and that were so weary at times, and that symbolized the feet of consecration treading the narrow, rugged way, and that so soon would be pierced with the nails on the cross, should now be highly honored by one who appreciated and trusted them, who loved them and who was seeking to walk in the Master's steps.

When we get the right view of the matter, we can indeed sympathize with our Lord's expression, "Let her alone." Trouble her not. Take it not from her—as though when the first motion was made to use the spikenard the apostles had wished to have it spared that they might sell it, and as though our Lord hindered them from using persuasion to that end, saying, Let her alone, do not hinder her.

Spikenard Mary represents one of the most beautiful elements of Christian character amongst the Lord's people from that day until the present. For be it remembered that the entire Church of Christ in the largest sense is the "body of Christ," as expressed by Jesus and also by the apostles. The Mary class, who would rather purchase perfume at a great cost whereby to serve the anointed Church, the body of Christ, than to spend the same upon themselves, is still with us, and has been of the Church for these eighteen centuries. Not only was the Head of the body anointed, perfumed, honored, comforted, cheered, but all of the members since have likewise received a blessing from this class, this spikenard Mary class. It is composed not always of the orators, the wealthy or the wise—its ministry is unostentatious and to many, especially of the world, it seems foolishness and waste—but the Lord appreciates it, and so do the members of his body who are comforted and refreshed thereby. Blessing be upon this Mary class!

Honor to Members—Honor to Head

But if there have been members all the way down who have been comforted in this way, should we not expect some particular blessing of the kind in the end of this age, upon the "feet" members? According to our understanding we are now in the closing of this age—the Head has been glorified, many of the members of the body have passed beyond the veil, and only the feet are here. Perhaps this very picture of Mary's anointing the feet of our Lord as well as his head constitutes a type or picture of what we may expect in this present time. And here comes in a beautiful feature of the divine arrangement—we may all be of the Mary class as well as of the feet class. In other words, each member of the body of Christ may to some extent serve the fellow-members of the body, the fellow-members of the feet, as Mary served the feet of Jesus.

Let each one of the Lord's true people as he studies this matter conclude that by the grace of God he will join the Mary class, and purchase spikenard very costly and lavish it upon the feet of the body of Christ—the Church—the true members. This will mean love, sympathy, kindness, gentleness, patience and assistance and comfort. It will mean large and growing development in all the fruits and graces of the Spirit, whose combined name is Love.

Dear readers, let us each remember that while it is impossible for us to do as Mary did in this lesson, it is the privilege of each to do still more important things for each other, for the brethren of Christ now in the world, the feet members of his body. Hers was a literal perfume and in time lost its virtue; but the little acts of kindnesses and helpfulness which we may render one to another will never lose their merit in the estimation of our Lord, and never lose their fragrance to all eternity in the estimation of each other. The little things of life, the little words, the little tokens, the kind looks, the little assistances by the way, these and not great things are our possibilities, our perfumes, the one for the other.

"Wash One Another's Feet."

The washing of the feet in olden times in oriental lands was very necessary to the comfort, and hence to wash one another's feet would signify to comfort and refresh one another even in the most menial services. This is the essence of our Lord's lesson to us, that we should be glad for any opportunity for serving one another, for comforting and helping one another, however menial the service. Apply this now to the expression of our lesson. Mary washed our Lord's feet with perfume, and the Mary class, the most loving and devoted class in the Church, are to help one another, to wash one another's feet; and they are to do so not in the rudest and clumsiest manner imaginable, but, inspired by love and devotion one to another, they are to wash one another's feet with the kindness and sympathy and love and appreciation symbolized by Mary's spikenard; and their comforting of one another is to be with that love and solicitation which was represented by Mary's using the very locks of her head for her Master's feet.

We see some evidence that this love, this spikenard-Mary love and sympathy, is growing amongst the members of the Lord's body; that as they perceive the animosity of the world and the flesh and the Adversary against the Lord's anointed they are all the more devoted one to another, and all the more disposed to honor one another with care and love and sympathy, and to speak and act generously and kindly one toward another. We are glad of this—**we know of no better evidence of growth in grace on the part of the consecrated.** Let the good work go on until we shall have filled the house with the perfume of love, until the whole world shall take knowledge of how Christians love one another—not in a narrow or partisan sense, but in the sense that Christ loved all who love the Father and all who sought to walk in the Father's ways.

Let Us Do It Now

If Mary had waited another week she might have used the perfume upon herself but not upon the Lord—within a week from the time of this incident our Lord was buried, the tomb was sealed, the Roman Guard stood before it and there would have been no opportunity even to have poured it upon his dead body. How much better that she improved the opportunity, that she showed the Lord her devotion while he was still her guest. The parallel is here: it will not be long until all the members of the body of Christ will have filled their share of the sufferings and have passed beyond the veil "changed."

Wisdom tells us that we should not delay in bringing our alabaster boxes of ointment and pouring their contents upon our dear ones of the body of Christ, the feet of Christ. No matter if they do not notice us, or think of us, or pour any upon us as members of the feet; let us do our part, let us be of the Mary class, let us pour out the sweet perfume upon others, and the house, the Church of the Lord, will be filled with the sweet odor, even though some disciples might mistakingly charge us with being extravagant with our love and with our devotion, not understanding that the Master by and by will say again, "Let her alone, she hath done what she could." Our Lord's estimate of this spikenard and anointing is that it is all that we can do—nothing could be more or better. It indicates love, great love—and "love is the fulfilling of the law."

"Let us consider one another," said the Apostle —consider one another's weaknesses, consider one another's trials, consider one another's temptations, consider one another's efforts to war a good warfare against the world, the flesh and the Adversary —consider one another's troubles in the narrow way against opposition from within and without, and as we do so it will bring to our hearts sympathy, a sympathy which will take pleasure in pouring out the spikenard perfume, very costly, purest and best, upon all who are fellow-members of the one body.

Some one has spoken of the great "Society of Encouragers" who do so much to help encourage and uplift the footsore and weary in the pathway of life. It is not a great society so far as members are concerned, but it is a great society from the Lord's standpoint and from the standpoint of all who have been helped and encouraged by it. Spikenard Mary might have been said to have been a prominent member in this society of encouragers. We may well imagine that as our dear Redeemer was thinking of the severe trials, including the cross, of the week already begun, Mary's manifestation of love and devotion would come to him as a special encouragement and refreshment of spirit.. So few seemed to understand him! even his disciples did not appreciate the situation. Here was one who at least loved him, had confidence in him. No doubt it gave him courage for the remaining days of his journey.

The Truth Tersely Stated

Respecting the propriety of using present opportunities for the comfort and encouragement one of another, a writer has pointedly said:

"Don't keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up till your friends are dead. Fill their lives with gladness. Speak approving, cheering words while they can hear them . . . If my friends have alabaster boxes full of the fragrant perfume of sympathy and affection laid away, which they intend to break over my body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours, and open them, that I may be refreshed and cheered by them while I need them . . . I would rather have a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without a eulogy, than life without the sweetness of love and sympathy. . . Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward on the weary road."

Mrs. Preston's poem, "Ante Mortem," expresses the same thought thus:—

"Had I but heard
One breath of applause, one cheering word—
One cry of "Courage!" amid the strife,
So weighted for me with death or life—
How would it have nerved my soul to strain
Thro' the whirl of the coming surge again."

Sacrifice of Sweet Odor

The Apostle, speaking of the ministries of the Church one for another, says that ours is a sacrifice of sweet odor unto God, but again he adds that the Gospel referred to is of life unto life to some and of death unto death to others. That is to say, good deeds, kind words and efforts will be appreciated by those who are in the right attitude of heart to appreciate them, while on the contrary the same good deeds will arouse offence and constitute a bad odor to those who are in a wrong condition of heart. How often have we seen it so, that with our best endeavors to serve the feet of Christ some have been comforted and refreshed, others have been angered —to one the effort was a sweet odor, to the others it was an offensive odor, because of their wrong attitude of heart toward the Lord and toward the body of Christ—because, perhaps, of their ambitions or what not that were interfered with.

It was just so at Bethany: the sweet odors that filled the house, and the blessing and refreshment that came to Mary in connection with the ministration, had a very different effect upon Judas. He was angry; his selfishness hindered his appreciation of the honor done to the Lord; he could think only of himself and what he had hoped to get out of the transaction, and how, so far as he was concerned, the whole matter was a waste. The sourness that came to his heart because of its wrong attitude is indicated by the testimony that he straightway went to the chief priests to bargain with them for the betrayal of Jesus. Let us, then, dear brethren, see to it that our hearts are in a loving attitude toward the Lord and not in a selfish attitude—that we appreciate everything done in his name and for his body, and that we be not self-seeking. Otherwise the result will be with us the savor of death unto death, as it was with Judas.

This concludes our lesson. It was the next day probably that the Jews began to gather in considerable numbers to see Jesus and Lazarus, and to take counsel respecting the putting of them to death— "for the good of the cause." And, by the way, let us remember that the "good of the cause" has nearly always been the basis for every mean and despicable act against the Truth from first to last. Let us beware of such a sectarian spirit; let us see to it that our love for the Lord and all of his brethren is sincere, and not a personal and selfish one for ourselves or some denomination, otherwise we know not into what evils we might be led. Z. '05: 103-107.

"The Lord is My Shepherd"

THE LORD, in calling his people his sheep, chose a very significant emblem of the character he would have manifested in them. The most noticeable characteristics of the sheep are meekness, docility and obedience to the shepherd to whose care they fully entrust themselves. They are very true to the shepherd: they study his voice, watch for the indications of his will, and trustfully obey him. When they hear his voice, quickly, and without the slightest hesitation or faltering, they run to obey it. But the voice of a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.

What a lesson is here for the Lord's "little flock," over whom he is the good Shepherd. The weakest lamb in the flock knows his voice and hears him say, "This is the way: walk ye in it." **And while there are thousands of voices calling, now in this direction and now in that, the Lord's sheep, acquainted with his Spirit and his Word, turn away from all save the well known voice of the Shepherd.** In various ways our Shepherd speaks to his flock of sheep and lambs. His written words treasured up in the heart mark the way of truth continually; his special providences further shape the peculiar course of each individual; **and the abiding presence of his holy Spirit makes manifest every intrusion of any other spirit which seeks to beguile and to lead astray.** The true sheep will carefully listen for the faintest accents of the voice of the Shepherd—i.e., he will treasure up his words in his heart; he will study his providences; and he will cultivate that communion and personal fellowship with the Lord which are his privilege. **Those who thus abide in him can never go astray.**

"They can never, never lose their way."

They may not have much learning, and, humanly speaking, would not be able to grapple with all the sophistries of error. But, being so well acquainted with the Master's voice, they quickly perceive that such voices are the voices of strangers, and they will not follow them; for they are loyal and obedient to the Shepherd only.

In such an attitude of mind and heart is our only safety in the midst of all the difficulties and confusion of this evil day. And all such may confidently sing with the Psalmist—

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down [to rest—the rest of faith] in green pastures [with abundance of satisfying food]; he leadeth me beside the still waters [deep, refreshing truths]. He restoreth my soul [reclaims it from death]; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake [because I am his child and bear his honored name]. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death [The entire journey of life since the fall has been through a vale of tears, upon which rests the shadow of death], I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. [Thy word and providences discipline and guide me in the way]." Our Shepherd's providence not only disciplines the true sheep, but protects them from the "wolves" and other foes.

With the Prophet, we can also say, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies [for even while beset by Satan and Sin, we are sustained by the Lord's abundant provision for every necessity]; thou anointest my head with [the] oil [of joy], my cup [pleasure] runneth over [even while, as a pilgrim, I am beset with life's difficulties]." And, in view of the Lord's present and past leading, all, who continue to be truly his sheep, can certainly trust that—"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me, all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord [will be recognized as a member of his household, as his child] forever."

Let us seek to cultivate more and more the meek, docile and loyal character of the sheep, that so we may be abundantly blessed by the care of the good Shepherd. Such a disposition does not commend itself to the world—the wayward goat, the bold lion, or the stealthy bear, the subtle serpent and vicious vampire are more fitting emblems of their ideals, and are usually the emblems selected for their escutcheons. But let the world love its own, while we remember that we are not of the world, but are sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, and that **our safety and spiritual prosperity depend, not upon our own wisdom and sagacity, but entirely upon our diligent hearkening to, and patient following of, the voice of the good Shepherd,** who will very soon highly exalt his little flock and crown them with an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Z. '02:365-366.

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Let each one who has taken the name of Christ be on the lookout to apprehend and eradicate **every** trace of the meanness, selfishness, rudeness, dishonesty, which as members of the fallen race still cling to us and are become so much a part of us that we are often disposed to call them **natural** traits. Let us remember that, even if our Lord and our brethren in Christ overlook these blemishes (rightly distinguishing between the "new creature in Christ" and these contrary elements of his old nature reckoned dead), yet the world cannot so distinguish and will charge to the cause of Christ all the faults and imperfections they see in his professed followers. Thus that holy name is profaned among the Gentiles, daily, by many. Z. '98:183.

◆

The Lord's final decision is not, If you be ignorant of certain things you are none of mine; nor, If you have certain knowledge you are mine; but, "If any man have not the spirit (disposition, mind) of Christ, he is none of His." Z. '98:248.

The true child of God will be in such close fellowship with the Father, and with the spirit of truth and righteousness and love, that anything which would interrupt or hinder this fellowship would be esteemed a calamity, however sweet or precious it might be to the natural man. The new creature is willing rather to cut it off, if it were dear as a right hand; to pluck it out, if it were precious as a right eye; than to allow any earthly thing to intervene between him and the divine loving—favor which he has learned so to enjoy that he considers it better than all the rest of life. Z. '01: 245-246.

◆

The prize is ours, if we but remain faithful. But, as the Apostle says, "Having done all, **'stand'** "—with all the armor on: stand in various testings which will then, as much as ever along the race-course, be brought to bear against us to divert us away from the mark, before the great Inspector and giver of rewards shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."—Eph. 6: 13-17. Z. '01: 10.

◆

There is really no more worthy trait to adorn a righteous character than that of gratitude. It is gratitude that returns to God that filial affection which is due from the creature to the Creator. It is gratitude that encourages and sweetens the cup of loyal devotion between friend and friend. It is always the due reward of loving service and especially of self-sacrificing service, though it is not always the reward rendered. Z. '96: 171.

◆

Realizing always God's superior wisdom and boundless love for us, we should fear to take our interests in any degree out of his hand. Thus we may always live rejoicing, realizing that, whatever may befall us, all is working out for good to us. We may need an acquaintance with pain, or to come into perplexity and almost to want, in order to have needful experience or testing or chastisement. And we should learn to search for and appreciate the lesson or chastisement quickly, and prove ourselves apt pupils in the school of Christ. Z. '96: 170.

◆

It is plain that in the cultivation of the spirit of praise, thanksgiving and loving expectation of all the manifest goodness of God is the Christian's secret of a happy life. And in order to the cultivation of such a spirit it is necessary that we continually call to mind his acts of mercy and of grace; that in our prayers we frequently tell him how all his goodness is remembered, how every fresh evidence of his love and care causes faith to take deeper root and makes the sense of his presence and favor more fully realized; and how through such experiences our love and joy are made to abound more and more. We love him because he first loved us; and every time we see some new mark of his love, our love, if we have truly appreciative hearts, is called out more and more, and we are made to rejoice in God, in whose presence is fullness of joy. It is to this end that our Lord encourages our frequent coming to God in prayer with large requests for his favor, saying, "Ask, and ye shall receive, **that your joy may be full."**—Jno. 16: 24; Z. '96: 211.

The Apostle says that we should cleanse ourselves from filthiness of the spirit. This does not imply that the New Creature is filthy, but that the mind is filthy. How could the mind of the New creature be "filthy" or unclean? We answer that the New Creature must use the old brain: and it is for the New Creature to exercise control, not only in the things which we chew and take into our bodies, but also in the operation of the brain, so that we shall think purely: for the brain, as well as the hands and feet, is the implement the servant of the New Creature, who is responsible for these things. He is to show his loyalty to the Lord by the way he deals with these things entrusted to his care.

We are to understand that God will look even deeper than our words and actions—even to the thoughts and intentions of our minds to see to what extent we would harbor an impure thought. If we find that there has been harbored **in our mind** a thought disloyal to the Lord and to the brethren, or a malicious thought, **whether spoken or not,** it is a sin, a blemish, a filthiness of the mind; for it is something out of harmony, with us as New Creatures—out of harmony with our God. Z. '12: 63.

◆

It is the Teacher who is to be the decider of what lessons we need, what experiences, what trials, what difficulties, what encouragements, what assistance are necessary to us. The promise is, that no good thing will He withhold. He will give the warnings, the corrections, the encouragements, the blessings and the promises, according as we need them and are in a condition to make profitable use of them. Not everyone who starts to be a disciple will win the great prize. Z. '04: 27.

◆

The soul that **abides** in Christ, and in which his words **abide,** would not dare take the helm into his own hands to steer his own course, even where he thinks he can see; but, laboring still at the oar, pulling as best he can, he leaves the **helm** in the Father's hands and **could not ask** to have the course changed in any degree. Z. '96: 150.

◆

Nor can we pray the Lord not to permit these trials of faith and patient endurance; for we recognize that "the very elect" must be a tried people, because of the very object of their election,—that they may be joint-heirs with Christ in the long-promised Kingdom that is to judge and bless the world during the Millennium. As the Apostle says, these "fiery trials **must** try you." It is a matter of **must,** of necessity, as respects all who would share in his glorious Kingdom. Z. '01: 120.

◆

It is well that we should note that selfishness lies at the foundation of almost every sin and every crime, that is and ever has been committed. Z. '01: 103.

◆

The Church, the Temple of God, will be so filled with all the fullness of God, when made like unto the glorious Lord, that nothing could add to their blessing of knowledge and divine favor. Z. '01: 202.

Let us each, dear brethren, be very solicitous for ourselves and for each other: and counting the prize set before us in the gospel as superior to all else, as the Apostle says, "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Let us so love all the Lord's children that their welfare will be our chief concern, and this will mean our own spiritual health. Yet we must not permit our love even for the brethren to hinder our confidence in the Lord's love and wisdom in respect to his terms in the choice of his Bride;—even though the siftings should take from us some, whose fellowship we dearly cherish. Z. '01: 120.

◆

It is in the school of experience that we learn our most valuable lessons; and, the ripest saints, in whom we find the deepest sympathy, the most patient forbearance, and the most tender helpfulness and consideration, are those who have been through the fire of affliction, and who have been rightly exercised thereby. It was when the cross grew heaviest and the clouds were darkest, and when the tempest was highest, that the Master's presence was most sensibly realized, and the blessed lessons of faith and trust and of the Lord's tender, personal love were sealed upon the hearts of the disciples. It is under such discipline that the soul is mellowed to a loving submission that calmly says, I can do all things, bear all things, through Christ who strengtheneth me. As gradually the dross of the old nature is consumed, and the gold becomes more and more manifest, these precious souls become ever dearer to their loving Lord. So dear are they to him that in every affliction he is near with his grace to sustain and his presence to cheer; and the deepest shades of sorrow become memory's most hallowed resting places, where the Day Star shines the brightest. Z. '96: 44.

◆

All along, in every sense of the word, the Lord has permitted His Truth and His Plan to come through channels more or less impaired. Our Lord Jesus seemed to have something of this kind in mind when He said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." (Luke 10: 21.) The Lord hides His truth in the sense of permitting it to come through unpopular channels. Sometimes the unpopularity is deserved, and sometimes undeserved, but it always serves to keep away those who are not in the right attitude of heart. **The pure in heart, however, are never stumbled by these matters; for the Lord will help them over these difficulties.** . . Z. '17: 27.

◆

The spirit of peace is contagious amongst the Lord's people, even as the spirit of anger is contagious in the flesh. "My peace I give unto you," said our Lord; and hence whoever has not this spirit ruling in his heart lacks an important evidence of discipleship. Z. '01: 140.

◆

As Solomon was the wisest man, so also he was the most foolish man; for the greater the opportunity the greater the loss, and the greater the knowledge possessed the greater the sin in its misuse. Z. '96: 279.

Undoubtedly some of our difficulties and trials, physical as well as others, are amongst our greatest blessings, working out for us a better portion in the future, by working in us faith, patience, true reliance upon the Lord. Z. '01: 271.

◆

The Lord Himself has the direction of His message and of His ministers. Z. '17: 27.

◆

The only perfect friendship subsists among those who resemble each other in virtue, because those who love their friends for their virtue, love them for what is not a temporary appendage, but a permanent essential in their character. Z. June '84: 6.

◆

Our Lord says, "I will guide thee with mine eye." The eye is very expressive of every emotion of pleasure or pain, and a loving nature, whose **delight** is in the favor of another, will carefully note the look of approval or disapproval, before a word of commendation or reproof is uttered. Thus our Lord would guide us, but only those whose **delight** is in the law of the Lord can be so led. To such loving ones reproof and exhortation are scarcely necessary; they may walk from day to day in delightful communion with God, and even while their human nature is being crucified daily, the new nature may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Z. June '84: 8.

◆

With our poor and at very best imperfect brains there is great danger of our being misled, and hence the Word of the Lord appeals to us with force that we should not even **touch** that which we realize is untrue. This does not mean that we may not weigh and balance evidences to discern the truth from the untruth; but it does mean that as soon as the truth is discovered it will be embraced and acknowledged, and the untruth as vigorously disavowed and completely withdrawn from. To tamper with error after we see it to be error;—to "see how it would reason out, anyway," when we know the matter is on a wrong basis, is to lay a trap for our spiritual feet, one which frequently stumbles travelers on the way to Zion. Z. '01: 324.

◆

We believe that even the most humble, the most faithful, the most zealous to be servants of the cause, have **continual** need to be on their guard. Z. '04: 140.

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The Lord is our strength; we lean not upon human might,—neither of our own or of other men. We hold the Head, from whom not only come the laws which govern us, but from whom come the strength, the direction, the protection, the care, which we need and which we enjoy. The Lord is become our salvation; he has saved us from the condemnation of sin through faith in the blood; he has rescued us from the love of sin. **He has not only revived us, but strengthened us, and enabled us to walk in the narrow way, and to do so with joy and gladness and leaping.** He is our salvation already—the salvation that is to be brought unto us, and thus to be complete in us, in the first resurrection, is already begun—for we are already passed from death unto life, and have the witness of this in the holy spirit. Z. '02: 10.

Helpful Thoughts From Volume Five

Many whose hearts are wholly out of harmony with the principles of the Spirit of holiness, copy these graces (of the spirit) as a gloss or surface gilding, to cover the baser metal of a depraved nature—unregenerate, unsanctified, selfish, out of harmony with the Lord and the Spirit of his holiness. We are, therefore, to closely distinguish between those who gild the surface of their conduct and those whose hearts have been transformed by the Spirit of the Lord. The latter only are the sons of God, who have his favor, and who will shortly be blessed and glorified. Page 292.

◆

If we desire to be filled we must eat; assuredly we must partake of the feast or we will not experience the satisfaction which the eating was designed to give. He who will not eat of a full table will be empty and starved, as truly as though there were no food. As the asking of a blessing upon the food will not fill us, but thereafter we must partake of it, so the possession of the Word of God, and the offering of our petition to be filled with the Spirit, will not suffice us; we must eat the Word of God, if we would derive his Spirit from it. Our Master declared, "The **words** that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life" (John 6:63); and of all who are filled with the Spirit it is true, as spoken by the prophet, "Thy words were found and I **did eat them.**" (Jer. 15:16; Rev. 10:9.) It is absolutely useless for us to pray Lord, Lord, give us the Spirit, if we neglect the Word of truth which that Spirit has supplied for our fulfilling. If we merely pray for the Spirit and do not use the proper means to obtain the Spirit of truth, we will continue to be at most only "babes in Christ," seeking outward signs, in proof of relationship to the Lord, instead of the inward witness, through the Word of truth, which he has provided. Page 225.

◆

It seems expedient to caution some that although a knowledge of the Truth, a knowledge of the Scriptures, is important, essential to the possession of the Spirit of the Truth, nevertheless, one might have **much** knowledge of the Word of God without having **any** of its Spirit. To receive the **Spirit** of the Truth is to come into heart harmony with the Truth, to come into mental accord and co-operation with the Divine will expressed in the Word. This condition can be attained in one way only: by first accepting the Lord Jesus as our Redeemer and Justifier, and secondly, consecrating ourselves unreservedly to seek to know and to do his will. Page 205.

◆

The rapidity with which we may acquire more and more of the holy Spirit, coming into fuller and fuller knowledge and accord with every feature of the divine plan, is dependent largely upon our realization of our own imperfections, and the degree of our consecration to the Lord. Page 185.

Though there remains in the flesh of the "new creatures," possessed of the new mind or new will, a weakness of heredity, a tendency toward passion or strife, so that they may need continually to keep on guard against these and may occasionally be overtaken in a fault, contrary to their wills, nevertheless these unintentional weaknesses are not counted unto them as sins, nor as the acts of the "new creature," but merely as defects which belong to the old nature, which, so long as the new nature opposes them, are reckoned as covered by the merit of the ransom—the great sin-offering made by the Captain of our Salvation. **It is the "new creature" alone that is being tried, tested, fitted, polished and prepared for joint-heirship with Christ in his Kingdom, and not the body of flesh, which, of such, is reckoned dead.** Page 117.

◆

It is in vain that we seek to be filled with the holy Spirit if we do not give attention to the divine arrangement provided for this very purpose. If we neglect the Word of God we are neglecting this sanctifying power; if we neglect prayer we are neglecting another privilege, and the helpfulness which it brings; if we neglect to assemble ourselves with those who are the Lord's people, and in whom we see the "seal" of this Spirit, we will fail to get the benefits and helps which "every joint supplieth"—including the helps which God has promised to the Church as a whole, through various members which he sets in the body for the exposition of his word, and the obtaining therefrom of its sanctifying power of Spirit.—1 Cor. 12:25-28; Eph. 4:16. Page 245.

◆

The true proper consecration differs from all others. It has but the one shrine at which it bows: it bows to Jehovah's will, surrendering self and self-will a living sacrifice on the Lord's altar, a reasonable service. **It makes no stipulations or reservations.** The language of the Chief Priest is that of each member of the "royal priesthood": "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." "Lo I come (as in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." Such are made partakers of the holy Spirit. Page 195.

◆

He who has this seal or mark of sonship is he who not only seeks to do the will of the Father, but doing it finds it "not grievous," but delightsome.—1 John 5:3. Page 248.

◆

The child of God who is filled with the holy Spirit is a giant in comparison with his own natural self; because his fears are quelled, his heart is established, his faith is rooted and grounded, and his soul is anchored sure and steadfast, within the vail. Thus he is held from being driven onto the rocks of disaster, when the stormy winds of trouble prevail. The holy Spirit is thus a power to those who possess it, which has often caused amazement to their enemies. Page 249.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER TWENTY-EIGHT

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The Memorial Passover Supper

This year the Memorial service will be in order on Thursday evening, April 1st, after six o'clock (Nisan 14th). The next afternoon, Friday, April 2nd, at 3 p.m., will correspond to the hour of our Lord's death: the Jewish Passover Feast beginning three hours later.

WHAT WE MEMORIALIZE

We memorialize four great matters:—

(1.) The death of our Lord Jesus as the Passover Lamb.

(2.) Our relationship or participation with him in the sufferings of Christ, the death of Christ, as followers in his steps and sharers in his cup.

(3.) We celebrate incidentally and prospectively the great deliverance which soon will follow this passing over of the present night-time. The deliverance will affect first of all those passed over, the Church—the "little' flock" and the "great company," the antitypes of the Royal Priesthood and the Levitical host or tribe. The deliverance of these will come in the morning, the resurrection morning, the Millennial morning.

(4.) We also incidentally commemorate the great "feast of fat things" which will follow the passing over of the Church, when the passed-over ones shall be associated with their Lord in his heavenly Kingdom as the great antitypical Prophet, Priest, Judge, Mediator and King over all the earth, to bless and uplift the human family through the merit of the same precious blood which he now permits the passed-over ones to participate in sacrificially, after the imputation of its merit to them has made them worthy.

These different points should be kept in memory separate and distinct from each other if we would have the greatest blessing from this Memorial. Z. '10: 115.

ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at O'Brien Hall, Vancouver, B.C., Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 26th, 27th and 28th, 1920.. The Convention Hall is situated at the corner of Hastings and Homer Streets.. Two meals will be provided daily for all conventioners, and free accommodation has been arranged for all the Lord's poor. Reception Committee will meet all boats and trains. For further information please write Brother George H. Biddle, 816 12th Avenue West, Vancouver, B.C. Phone Number, Fairmont 3443.

As God's providence was over Daniel, permitting him to come under the power of natural wild beasts, and making this a test of his fidelity to God and to principles of righteousness, so the Lord's providence sometimes permits his faithful ones to be exposed to the venom and malice and hate and misrepresentation and slander of human tongues, far more vicious and far more terrible every way than the wild beasts of the jungle, which can harm but for a moment. Nevertheless, as the Lord was able to deliver Daniel, he is not less able to send his angel (his providences) to shut the mouths of those who would do injury to his people. They may gnash upon them with their teeth, as the lions may have been permitted to do to Daniel, to test his faith in the Lord; yet we are to remember that all things are subject to him with whom we have to do, and whose service we have entered through vows of consecration. Z. '99: 185.

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The Lord is willing to help us to humble ourselves in proportion as we are diligent for his service, willing to be nothing ourselves and careful to recognize as leaders only such as hold forth the words of life without seeking undue prominence for themselves in the Church. Z. '09: 169.

When our Lord speaks of the world, he evidently refers to "Churchianity." He says, "Marvel not if the world hate you. Ye know that it hated me before it hated you." The world that hated Jesus and crucified him was the Jewish world, or nominal Israel; and the world from which we may look for persecution, similarly, would be the so-called Christian world—Christendom. Not only so, but sometimes the persecution comes from those who once were brethren in the Truth—those who once dipped with us in the dish of Divine nourishments at the table of the Lord. The trial is all the more severe when it comes from this quarter. Yet was it not so with our Lord, and does it not seem to have cut him to the quick that Judas kissed him at the very moment that he betrayed him? Z. '09: 39.

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Should the Adversary make suggestions to us of discontent or dissatisfaction with the manner in which things pertaining to the Lord's people have been progressing, let us answer him that we know he is mistaken, because the Lord himself is present and is supervising his work. If at any time matters seem to be going contrary to our hopes or expectations, let us not think the Lord has neglected the supervision of his work and is allowing the Adversary to dash it to pieces. On the contrary, let us establish our hearts in the fact that the Lord is too wise to err and is as able as he is willing to make all things work together for good to us and to all the called ones, according to his purpose. Z. '09: 6.

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While millions are seeking for joy, pleasure, only a remarkably few have found them. Those few are God's saintly people. Z. '13: 156.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER TWENTY-EIGHT

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18: 51.

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD"

Psalms 23.

"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."—Psalm 23: 1.

OF ALL the beautiful symbolic pictures which the Lord gave us through the Prophet David, none seems more forceful than that of the Psalm which constitutes our lesson. The eastern shepherd and his love and care for his sheep are given us as an illustration of our heavenly Father's care over us. It is true that our dear Redeemer was sent forth as the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep, and by his death opened the door into the sheep-fold of divine love and favor and rest and peace. This was a favorite picture that our Lord Jesus gave us of himself: "I know my sheep, and am known of mine"; "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me"; "A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of a stranger." The Apostle followed the same thought when speaking of our Lord's return. He refers to him as the Good Shepherd of the flock: "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." (1 Pet. 2:25.) The same thought is maintained when the elders of the Church are referred to as pastors and "overseers of the Church of God."—Acts 20:28.

But while it is refreshing for us to take a comprehensive view of the divine favor and care manifested in provisions made for our welfare as the Lord's sheep, it is well that we should ever keep in mind that the under-shepherds do not own the flock, and that their value to the flock as overseers consists in their faithfulness in making known to the sheep the message of the Great Shepherd and, to the extent of their ability, communicating his tone and his spirit with his Word.

On the other hand the sheep are called upon to mark the spirit of the under-shepherds, whether or not it comports with that of the Chief Shepherd, so that they be not led astray. They are to try the spirits of those who pose as pastors or under-shepherds, to note whether they be of God or whether they speak of themselves; whether their words and deeds are according to love or according to selfishness. They are enjoined to note these under-shepherds who feed upon the flock, but do not feed the flock.

Examining our text critically, we perceive that the Shepherd is not any of the under-shepherds, nor even our Lord Jesus, but the heavenly Father. The Hebrew word here rendered Lord is Jehovah. This fact greatly enhances the value of the entire picture. While it is proper for us to love all the sheep and the "under-shepherds" and the "Good Shepherd" of the flock, it adds to our joy to know who is the "Great Shepherd" and to hear the "Good Shepherd," his Son, assure the sheep of the Father's love, saying, "The Father himself loveth you." How wonderful that the heavenly Father, surrounded by the sinless angelic hosts, should feel an interest and a care for his human sheep of the earthly plane, who, through Adam's disobedience, were plunged into death; and how precious to us is the knowledge that at great cost he sent his Son to be our "Good Shepherd," and to bring back to the divine fold all of the sheep that are desirous to return! . . .

We are specially glad to know of the "little flock" which the Lord is now selecting from the world, and we are specially glad to be privileged to join its numbers now and our Redeemer-Shepherd "through evil report and through good report," whithersoever he may lead us in the "narrow way" of self-sacrifice. We rejoice that we hear his encouraging voice; that our present trials and difficulties are all foreseen; that he knoweth the way that we take, and that he is able and willing to make all things abound to our highest good. It gives us special comfort to have this assurance that the "Trial of our faith is much more precious than that of gold"; and that as the metalurgist would carefully watch the gold tried in the fire, lest it should be destroyed by too intense a heat, so our Lord, our Shepherd, will watch over the interests of those that are his, and not suffer us to be tried above that we are able, but with every temptation will provide a way of escape. And if, perchance, our pathway may entail special trials, we have the "Good Shepherd's" assurance that these should be considered as "light afflictions" in comparison with the blessings to which they lead; that if rightly received they will work out for us "A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

"My Sheep Follow Me"

Our lesson relates, not to the flock of the future, but to the one of the present—the "little flock" which the Lord, during this Gospel Age, is now gathering out of every nation, people, kindred and tongue. It is the Father's flock, and his Son, our Redeemer, represents him, as he tells us, "As I hear, I speak": "I came to do the will of my Father in heaven." Thus the Shepherd's Son fully and completely represents the Great Shepherd; as he says, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine." And again, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me."

The wealth of our relationship to the "Great Shepherd" and his Son increases in our appreciation in proportion as we grow in knowledge. As our Redeemer said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."
—John 17:3.

"No good thing will he withhold
From sheep which stray not from his fold."

How comforting is the declaration, "I shall not want!" Our Lord illustrates this lesson by pointing out that a kind earthly father would not give a stone instead of bread, nor a serpent instead of fish, and so he assures us that our heavenly Father, much more loving and tender, will withhold from us nothing that will be for our good. We are to remember, however, that it is not as human beings that he does this, but as "New Creatures" in Christ Jesus. It is not the justified believer merely that is a member of this Little Flock at the present time, but the sanctified believer, fully consecrated to walk in the "Good Shepherd's" footsteps, to hear his voice and follow him. Our Lord informed us at the start that following him as his disciples, as his sheep of the Little Flock now being selected, must signify to us, as to him, worldly disfavor and opposition, not only from the prince of darkness, but also from those deluded by him and under the sway of his spirit of anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, backbiting, slander, evil-speaking, etc. And in addition to these things we are to expect to contend with our own blemishes and weaknesses. Such a picture of the "narrow way" would indeed have terrified us had it not been for our Shepherd's assurance of succor in every time of need, and his assurance that these trials to the flesh rightly received would constitute a part of our development in the spirit and preparation for the "Rest that remaineth for the people of God."

"I shall not want" may be applied to the necessities of the present life. We are assured that "No good thing will he withhold from us;" but he specially means that we shall not want, not lack the disciplines, the trials, the instructions, the encouragements, the reproofs, and the assistance necessary to our attainment to all "The glorious things that God hath in reservation for those that love him." The only condition connected with this promise is that we shall abide in his love, abide in his flock, continue to hearken to his voice and to follow his directions. How dangerous then to all of the true sheep would be any measure of worldly ambition, pride or self-esteem! How necessary that the heart should be right, desirous of knowing and obeying the Shepherd's voice! With what care should the sheep scrutinize the motives which actuate their daily conduct, their words and the thoughts of their hearts! . . .

Lying Down in Green Pastures

To lie down is to be at rest, to be happy. This is the privilege of all the Lord's true sheep. Outwardly they may be distressed and "on the run," assailed by the world, the flesh and the Adversary, but as "New Creatures" they may be at rest, at peace, because of their nearness to the Lord, the Shepherd, and because of their faith in his overruling providence, which is able to make "all things work together for good." "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend (stumble) them." These let the "peace of God rule in their hearts . . . and are thankful." It is to these that our Lord's words apply, "My peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

This rest, this peace of heart, is absolutely essential to our development as "New Creatures," even as the crystals are deposited from the liquids when they are quiet and not when they are in agitation. So the crystalline character which God is developing in us absolutely demands that a condition of rest, peace, quietness of heart, shall be attained; and to the attainment of this condition patience, faith and love, the chief graces of the spirit, are necessary.

The Labyrinth of Life

"A labyrinth is a species of structure full of intricate passages and windings, so that when once entered it is next to impossible for an individual to extricate himself without a guide. The one in ancient Egypt, near Lake Moeris, was composed of twelve great palaces containing, according to Herodotus, three thousand chambers and halls. The palaces were connected by courts, around which ran a vast number of most intricate passages. Around the whole was a wall with only one entrance."

"Some years ago," writes Hawthorne, "a minister was rambling in the famous labyrinth of Henry VIII., at Hampton Court, near London, where the common children's puzzle is wrought out on a large scale by paths between high and thick evergreen hedges. He wandered about it for a time, but when the time for closing drew near, with all his efforts he could not find his way out, and he feared that he might have to remain all night. At last he looked up, and saw a man in the tower in the centre of the labyrinth who had been watching him all the time, and waiting to catch his attention. The eye above could see all so hidden from the man within, and soon guided him out of his difficulties. Visiting this labyrinth with Deacon Olney, we purchased a chart for our guide, remembering my friend's experience. When the time came for us to find our way out, we took the chart, and by careful study and exactness in following the designated way, we threaded the mazes of the labyrinth with success. Life is such a labyrinth. No person knows enough to guide his course unaided. He cannot see where the paths lead. The picture of the future is a sealed book to all."

One of the important lessons for every sheep to learn is need of the Shepherd's care and guidance through the labyrinth of life. "Who is sufficient for these things," writes the Apostle. Then he declares, "Our sufficiency is of God"—in Christ. He who redeemed us has gone the way before us and directed that we walk in his steps. Those who become so wise in their own conceits that they fancy there are nearer ways and shorter cuts and more flowery ways are deceiving themselves. If those who recognize the message and are walking in the Master's footsteps and are walking circumspectly, neglect these and become overcharged with the world and earthly ambitions and joys and toys, they are surely unwisely selling the glorious heavenly birthright for a mess of earthly pottage. On the contrary, he who carefully follows the Master, experiences the truth of the declaration, "He restoreth my soul." Some find their spiritual strength refreshed as they walk in the paths of righteousness in which the Lord leads. He leads them "for his name's sake." This is one of the considerations. Our Lord, the Shepherd, has undertaken to do a shepherding work; to gather a flock. His promise is involved; his honor is at stake! We may be sure that not only because of his love for us will he guide us aright, but because it would be a dishonor to him to make the slightest mistake in respect to our guidance. He is the Faithful Shepherd. The angelic hosts are watching and learning lessons in respect to all this shepherding of the flock through the narrow way. "Which things the angels desire to look into."—1 Pet. 1:12.

"The Valley of the Shadow of Death"

This valley was entered by our race because of our first parents' disobedience. We have been in the valley more than 6,000 years. The shadow of death has been over the human family, and its accompaniments of sickness, pain and sorrow have extended to every creature, so that the Apostle truly said, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God"—waiting for the uplifting power of the Millennial Age, waiting for the sons of glory, Jesus Christ and his Church, to bring the promised Restitution and uplifting out of "the valley of the shadow of death" back to the heights of light and love and the divine likeness.

The fear of evil, of trouble, of disaster hangs over the world and is accentuated by its ignorance of God and of the future. Under the influence of "doctrines of devils," the Adversary has made God's character and his Book repulsive to mankind in general and well-nigh quenched their love, while fanning their fears.

Our text represents the true sheep as saying, "I will fear no evil." How appropriate; how true! Weak and poor and insufficient and surrounded by foes, we nevertheless need not fear, and the developed sheep does not fear what the demons may seek to do, knowing that "all power in heaven and earth" is in the hands of our Shepherd King, and that he is directing our ways, and has guaranteed that our every experience shall work out a blessing, and that in permitting trials he merely designs our correction and instruction in righteousness and to draw us nearer to himself and make us copies of his Son, to the intent that by the First Resurrection change he may take us to himself and give us a share in the Millennial Kingdom. Ah! how true it is that we do not fear—because the Shepherd is with us! We have his promise, "Lo, I am with you, even to the end of the age." And furthermore we have the light of his Word, showing that the Shepherd is to be present with his sheep and to care for them and develop them.

"Thy Rod and Thy Staff Comfort Me"

The shepherd's rod or club was of hard wood, sometimes open and preferably of the shape of a golf stick, except that it was shorter and much heavier. With it the shepherd was prepared to defend the flock, combating every foe. The staff was lighter and more like a cane and longer, with a crook at the end. With its point the shepherd at times prodded the sheep that were careless, and with the hook he sometimes helped out one that had stumbled into the ditch, by putting the crook under its forelegs. Our Shepherd, too, has a rod for our enemies and a staff for his sheep—the one for our protection, the other for our relief and assistance and correction. How glad we are to know that all power is committed unto him in heaven and in earth and that under his protecting care nothing shall by any means harm us! What a comfort is here! No wonder that under such circumstances the sheep may enjoy "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," resting themselves, comforting themselves in the assurance that all things shall be overruled for their eternal welfare!

My Head Anointed, My Cup Overruns

Let us not spoil this beautiful picture with any thought of anointing a sheep's head, etc., but rather take the higher and grander and nobler view that our Lord Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed; and that his anointing was typified by the anointing of Aaron with precious oil (which typified the holy Spirit), which ran down his beard and unto the skirts of his garment. Let us think of this as the holy Spirit of Pentecost, which has anointed all the sheep which have come into the fold and the Body of Christ. Let us appreciate this anointing and abide under it, allowing it more and more to be what the Apostle terms an unction from the Holy One, affecting our every talent and power and bringing them all into subjection to the divine law of love.

"Let my eyes see Jesus only;
Let my feet run in his ways;
Let my hands perform his bidding;
Let my tongue speak forth his praise."

"My cup runneth over." Our Master's cup was one of suffering, ignominy, shame and death. We partake of it. It becomes our cup also; but he promises us a new cup of joy and rejoicing, which he will share with us fully in the Kingdom. That cup of joy and peace and divine favor and blessing our Master partook of by faith. And we now also have the same cup full to overflowing; but we cannot appreciate it fully until we shall be changed and made like our Head and share his glory. By faith we can enjoy it now and realize that it is full to overflowing. And our joys in the eternal future will be exceedingly and abundantly more than we could have asked or thought.

"Goodness and Mercy Pursue Me"

"Surely goodness and mercy shall pursue me all the days of my life." This appears to be the stricter translation and it contains a beautiful thought. These sheep of the Lord's "little flock"—these "New Creatures" of Christ Jesus, instead of being pursued by fears and terrors and trapped and ensnared, are following the Good Shepherd and hearkening to his voice: and, according to his promise, God's goodness and mercy are pursuing them, keeping after them, watching over them, assisting them, caring for them, upholding them in trials. These are the messengers of the Lord, of which the Apostle wrote, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation?" Surely this is so. Looking back we can praise the way in which goodness and mercy have pursued us, never leaving us!

"Angels watch him on his way
And aid with kindly arm;
And Satan, seeking out his prey,
May hate, but cannot harm.
O, child of God; O, glory's heir;
How rich a lot is thine!"

The conclusion of the whole matter—the end of the journey, is what? To occupy a place in the heavenly mansions in our Father's house! What a glorious consummation to the grandest of all hopes! Why should we murmur or complain at the roughness of the journey which will bring us to such a glorious goal? Let us say with the Psalmist:—

"What shall I render unto the Lord my God for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Most High!"
—Z. '08: 344-348.

The One Thing Desirable

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I bo afraid? . . . One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple."—Psa. 27: 1, 4.

THE inspired Psalmist in loftiest strains of devotion and fervor puts into the hearts and minds of God's consecrated people sentiments of faith and trust and love and adoration to God, who is worthy of all praise. While many of these sentiments were based upon his own checkered experience, they were uttered under divine inspiration for the instruction and edification specially of the true spiritual Israel of God.

Thus the Lord himself would indicate to us the sentiments of fervent devotion to him that should fill our hearts; and in this view of the matter we see how closely he would draw us to himself in love and faith and childlike confidence. While reason and common sense have their rightful place and are indispensable to a religious life, the soul that never mounts upon the wings of holy and fervent emotion, that is never stirred to its depths by a sense of the divine goodness and beneficence, has never yet experienced the blessedness of the relation of sonship. A true son of a beloved and approving father naturally experiences the fervor of tender emotion. Especially is this so of a true son of God who recognizes in his heavenly Father the perfection of every grace, the crowning glory of all excellence, and who lives in close communion and fellowship with him and has the constant witness in himself of his love and approval.

Ah, those were no empty words of our blessed Lord Jesus when he said,—"The Father himself loveth you." "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 16: 27; 14: 23.) It is under such conditions that all those holy emotions of love, tenderness, faith, gratitude and praise fill to the brim our cup of joy; and with holy ecstacy we sing, "My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

How full of the melody of fervent emotion, of grateful praise, and of loving confidence are the inspired psalms! They bid our hearts rejoice and our tongues be glad, and they show us how, by meditating on his word and obeying his precepts, to "Rejoice in the Lord always, and in everything give thanks."

It was in view of the Lord's providences and of his many deliverances from the power of his enemies, and of the uniform kindness and mercy of God as he meditated upon them, that David exclaimed, "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?" This consolation, variously expressed throughout the Scriptures, comes with all its blessed potency in our times of greatest need: the more desperate and determined the foes we encounter and the more fierce the conflict with the powers of darkness, the more glorious is the deliverance and the clearer are the manifestations of divine grace. And, as a consequence, faith takes deeper root, and, with renewed confidence and assurance, lays hold upon all the precious promises of God; and love and gratitude well up from hearts refreshed with an increased sense of the divine favor and blessing.

So it was with David; and so it is with God's faithful people who lead a life of prayer and faith and close fellowship with God. Such fellowship with God in adversity and in prosperity naturally tends more and more to center the heart's affections and desires in God, until the one thing supremely desired and sought after is that expressed by the Psalmist—to continually dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

To dwell continually in the house of the Lord signifies to be continually counted worthy and to be recognized of God as a member of his Church, "whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (Heb. 3: 6.) These, who hold fast their faith, and by faith overcome the allurements and temptations of the world, dying daily unto its spirit, hopes and ambitions, and living more and more unto God—these shall indeed dwell in the house of the Lord, in his holy, spiritual temple, his Church, forever. Now they dwell in the holy place of consecration and adoption; and the Lord says, "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels;" and by and by he will present them to himself "a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, and worthy, as kings and priests unto God, to pass beyond the vail into the Most Holy—into the glorious spiritual condition and into the immediate presence of God.

"To behold the beauty of the Lord" is to behold the beauty of holiness, to have this image of his glory ever before the mind's eye as our inspiration, our light, our guide, our pattern and our chief joy. Here indeed is the Christian's secret of a happy life—happy in the midst of whatever may come to him of affliction or pain or loss or perplexity or whatever experiences come through the checkered scenes of this present life. To behold the beauty of the Lord really is only possible to those who dwell in his house; for only to such does he reveal himself "the fairest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely." Such only know how to appreciate the beauty of his holiness; such only can delight themselves in the Lord and in the continual meditation of his law, and in conforming their lives to it.

"To inquire in his temple" signifies that those who are truly of the Lord's house are inquirers, students of his holy law and testimony, and that their delight is in so doing. The language of their hearts is, "Oh, how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day." "I have meat to eat that ye [who are of the world] know not of"; for "It is my delight to do thy will, O God."

This one desire is the sum and substance of the Christian's ambition as more and more he becomes dead to the world and alive toward God. Let us more and more seek after it and conform to it; for in so doing Christian courage, boldness, fortitude and zeal will be greatly multiplied. These all are not only born of faith, but they increase and grow strong by a living faith developed and strengthened by the lessons of experience.

Courage, born of faith and strengthened by endurance, cries with humble boldness in the midst of the deepest darkness of the most perplexing difficulties, and in the midst of the wildest storms and most threatening dangers, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

The Apostle Paul surely caught this blessed inspiration when he said, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say rejoice. . . . . Be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Mark how all through the Word of God we are taught, not only to be sober, vigilant, diligent, thoughtful, prayerful, and always abounding in the work of the Lord through whatsoever it may bring of toil or care or reproach or persecution, but in the midst of any or all of these experiences we are taught to be happy and to be filled with the inspiration of a holy joy.

And not only are we counselled to be joyous, but the manner of life which naturally produces this joy is pointed out to us. When we come into the Lord's family we enter a new and holy atmosphere which those only can realize and appreciate who have the one desire above referred to paramount to every other, viz.,—to be counted worthy to abide continually in the house of the Lord. Z. '96: 8, 9.

Let Us Go Forth

Heb. 13: 13.

"Silent, like men in solemn haste,
Girded wayfarers of the waste,
We pass out at the world's wide gate,
Turning our back on all its state;
We press along the narrow road
That leads to life, to bliss, to God."

"We cannot and we would not stay;
We dread the snares that throng the way;
We fling aside the weight and sin,
Resolved the victory to win;
We know the peril, but our eyes
Rest on the splendor of the prize."

"No idling now, no wasteful sleep,
From Christian toil our limbs to keep;
No shrinking from the desperate fight;
No thought of yielding or of flight
No love of present gain or ease;
No seeking man or self to please."

"No sorrow for the loss of fame;
No dread of scandal on our name;
No terror for the world's sharp scorn;
No wish that taunting to return.
No hatred can to hatred move,
And enmity but kindles love."

"No sigh for laughter left behind,
Or pleasures scattered to the wind;
No looking back on Sodom's plains;
No listening still to Babel's strains;
No tears for Egypt's song and smile;
No thirsting for its flowing Nile."

"What though with weariness oppressed?
'Tis but a little and we rest.
This throbbing heart and burning brain
Will soon be calm and cool again;
Night is far spent and morn is near—
Morn of the cloudless and the clear."

"'Tis but a little and we come
To our reward, our crown, our home!
Another year, or more, or less,
And we have crossed the wilderness;
Finished the toil, the rest begun,
The battle fought, the triumph won!"

—"C" page 226.

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"Without me ye can do nothing," is a statement well worthy of being deeply engraved in the heart of every truly consecrated member of the body of Christ. Z. '99: 110.

Decently and in Order

"Let all things be done decently and in order."—1 Cor. 14: 40.

Recently, by various circumstances among the companies of the saints, our attention has been drawn to the subject of **order** in the Church. . . . We find new difficulties and see new dangers arising, particularly on account of the great activity of our ever-vigilant adversary. These have led us again to a very careful consideration of the subject in the light of the Scriptures.

The apostles had much to say to the early Church concerning **order** in the assemblies of the saints; and apparently we have been feeling it to be of rather minor importance, because the Church is so near the end of her course. But it is safe to continue to heed very carefully "the things written aforetime for our admonition." Though the time is short to the end of our earthly pilgrimage, the issues in the battle with the principalities and powers of darkness become more and more critical, and the contest in every individual case is becoming more sharp and decisive. . . .

Order in the Early Church.

In the days of the early Church the printing press was not yet at the service of the truth, and even the manuscript copies of the Word of God were not in the hands of the people; nor had the masses the ability to read for themselves. The New Testament Scriptures, too, were only in process of construction. In course of time the Apostles' letters were exchanged among the congregations and copied for reconsideration and instruction.

Their lack, however, of the things we now possess, was, according to their necessities, made up to them by the great Head of the Church in the various gifts—of tongues, of interpretation, of prophecy, etc., many of which have now passed away, as Paul declared they would (1 Cor. 13:8), being superseded by the richer blessings of later times—the complete and compact Word of God in the hands of the people, among whom education has become general; and all the wonderful helps to its understanding afforded by Concordances, Bible Dictionaries, etc., etc.

In order that the meetings of the Church should be profitable in those early days an orderly arrangement of their affairs was enjoined by the Apostles, and acted upon by the various companies of believers. Those who had the gifts of tongues, or interpretation of tongues, or prophecy, were not all to speak at once; the unlearned and illiterate women of those days were not to interrupt and confuse the meetings, etc., etc. And the whole service was to be characterized becoming dignity, sobriety and solemnity; yet with the greatest simplicity, all, in an orderly way, from time to time, according to their several ability, taking part in the work of edifying and building up the body of Christ. Some had the ability to instruct the Church in sound doctrine; some had the gifts of tongues or of interpretation; some were able to exhort and encourage; and all were able to unite their hearts in prayer and to lift their voices in praise, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. (1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.) And thus becoming acquainted with each other, they were able to bear one another's burdens, and together to advance in Christian growth and development, their means of edification being supplied by the Lord, and their orderly methods through the advice of the apostles.

While this order in the exercises of their meetings was thus indicated, and was acted upon by the Church, there was also an order in the leadership and various duties of the Church. Thus, for instance, Paul and Barnabas, when they had gathered companies of believers in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, "ordained them elders in every church"; and then, commending them to the Lord, they took their departure. (Acts 14:21-23.) Paul also commissioned Titus to go from city to city, and in every place to ordain (appoint) elders, whose duty it was to take the oversight of the Lord's flock in their vicinity, to feed them with the truth, to guard them against the wolves in sheep's clothing, and, in a general way, to act as their representatives. (Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1, 2; Acts 15:6, 23-28.) The qualifications of these elders were also clearly set forth by the Apostle.—1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11.

Order Necessary Today

If this order was necessary to the spiritual prosperity of the early Church, and, because necessary, was so authoritatively enjoined and so universally adopted, so that there were no exceptions to the rule in any place, it is certainly a question worthy of consideration whether the same necessity does not exist among the companies of believers today.

We believe that the same necessity for order and for the appointment of elders does exist today, and for the same good reasons that it existed then, which reasons are as follows:—

(1) Because in the Church, as in a family, there are various degrees of spiritual development . . . , and it is necessary therefore that some one "apt to teach" should be in a position to do so. There are also various temptations, trials, difficulties and dangers which all are not equally prepared to meet. Hence the necessity of wise and discrete overseers, men of some experience and ability, deeply interested in looking out for the spiritual welfare of all, and capable of instructing them in the truth.

(2) Because now, as then amongst the early Church, there are wolves in sheep's clothing who would "privily bring in damnable heresies," against which the chosen elders should be able to defend the flock; and against which they should be able to arm them by leading them to a very thorough knowledge of the truth. Then, too, as the Apostle forewarned us, "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them"; and the faithful elders will be quick to discern and prompt to warn and defend the flock against all such influences.—Acts 20:28-30; Titus 1:10, 11; 2 Pet. 2:1-3.

(3) Because if no such arrangements and appointments had been made in the legitimate way indicated by the Apostles, some one will take the leadership and hold it indefinitely; and almost imperceptibly a whole company will find itself more or less in bondage to that one. Such cases have frequently arisen. . . .

(4) If no orderly arrangement exist in the Church, those who are most solicitous for her welfare, and anxious to spend and be spent in her service, may sometimes find themselves in a most embarrassing situation. Faithfulness to the truth often causes division. And some who dislike that faithfulness may strongly intimate that the services of the faithful are not desired, though such might not be the sentiment of all, nor even of the majority of the company. Such a one would therefore lack the support which a full expression would give, and must therefore fight the battle in defence of the flock almost single-handed and alone, or else leave them to the mercy of the adversary.

The fact that things are running smoothly in any locality without any systematic order having been agreed upon, or the duties, rights and liberties of the congregation thought of, is no guarantee that they will always run so. Our ever vigilant adversary will be sure at some time to take advantage of every unguarded place or principle in the Church collectively, as well as in the individual members of it. Therefore, as a Church, as well as in individual cases we should

"Leave no unguarded place, no weakness of the soul, (but)
Take every virtue, every grace, and fortify the whole."

The seasons of peace and rest are the times for preparing for the emergencies of storm and tempest, which, both collectively and individually, we must meet. That would be a very shortsighted captain and crew that would put out to sea in a vessel prepared only for fair weather. Wisdom counsels that no matter how fair the weather, how calm the sea, and how balmy the breezes on starting, the arrangements for battling with the storms must all be on board—the provisions for life-boats, life-preservers, for battening down the hatches, etc., must all be on board. In these testing times especially, when Satan is most active and subtle in his opposition, we need to look well to all the precautionary provisions that the Lord, through the apostles, has counselled for our protection. . . .

The Exercise of Liberty a Safeguard Against Bondage

Some are so glad to be free from Babylon's bondage that they need caution against an opposite extreme—lack of order. Some so fear the enslavement of sectarian earthly organizations that they fear to use their individual liberty to designate which of their number they believe would be the Lord's choice for particular services. They thus risk the very bondage they wish to avoid. The tendency in all is like a pendulum to go to extremes; but the tendency of the Word and spirit of the truth is to "establish, strengthen, settle you." The spiritual interests of the Lord's flock in any place are matters too serious and important to be left to haphazard conditions which Satan is very sure to take advantage of some time.

The fact that we have escaped from the bondage of Babylon, is no reason why we should discard all order and system in our affairs: the early Church might have had similar fears; for they had just escaped from the bondage of Judaism, and they were also instructed not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Gal. 5:1.) The yoke of bondage, however, was not the idea of system and order, but the bondage of the old Jewish faith—the Law-Covenant. From that they were to remain free; for Christ, by his sacrifice, had made them free. Evidently the systematic order enjoined upon the Churches and adopted by all was not considered a bondage; order was established and elders were appointed in every place; and the work of the Lord accordingly prospered. . . .

We should not reject anything merely because the nominal churches have it, but we should reject all that is wrong, all that is out of harmony with the Word and spirit of God. Had we been guided by a mere blind antagonism to the various sects, we might have gone to the extreme of discarding some old and valuable truths which the nominal Christian systems still hold in a way, though now with less and less tenacity. We might, for instance, have discarded the doctrines of the vicarious atonement, or of baptism, or the Lord's supper, merely because they hold them. But, taught by the Word of God, we have learned to hold fast that which is good; and among the good things is that of doing all that we do in the Lord's cause, as in everything else, **"decently and in order"**; but let it be the Scriptural order, and not the order of Babylon, which exalts a class of lords over God's heritage and ignores the true Head of the Church, which is the only rightful authority over it. Forget not that "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; but he that would be greatest among you shall be your servant." "Let all things be done decently and in order," and with a view to the building up of the body of Christ. 1 Cor. 14:40, 26.

The Prerogatives of the Head of the Church

It is a mistake to presume that the true Church has no bounden responsibilities, that we are all free to do as we please—to forsake the assembling of the saints if we please, or to associate ourselves with others if we please, or to go here and there and gather a morsel of food from all tables, good, bad and indifferent. **If we truly belong to Christ, the only liberty we enjoy is liberty from the bondage of sin and death and all the yokes that Satan would impose upon us.** Our freedom consists in the fact that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; we have passed from death unto life, and are no more the servants of the taskmaster, Sin. The old things that pertained to that bondage have passed away, and all things have become new. This is the blessed liberty of the sons of God. It is realized now by faith, and in a measure actually; but by and by it will be fully realized when this mortal (blemished and imperfect through the fall) shall have put on immortality.

But having been thus emancipated by Christ from the bondage of Sin, we have since come into covenant relations with him to do his will, which is also the will of our Heavenly Father, even as he also covenanted with God, saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God;" "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." So, as our Lord expressed it, we whom he made free from Satan's grievous yoke have taken upon us the yoke and burden of Christ—which is a joyous service. (Matt. 11:29, 30.) This, then, is the extent of our liberty if we are true to our covenant; and also the extent of our bondage. Praise his dear name! we find the yoke of our Lord and Redeemer easy, and his burden light, because of his love to us and our love to him.

The true Church, "whose names are written in heaven," is undoubtedly an organization, even in the present time, while it is subject to many vicissitudes; but it is a heavenly organization, not an earthly one. There are two senses in which the true Church of Christ may be considered: (1) The whole company of consecrated believers from the beginning of the Gospel age to its close constitute **one** body, **one** Church, not many; for the Lord established but **one** Church. And over that **one** Church he himself is the only "Lord" and "Head," the great "Chief Shepherd," and "Teacher," and the only authority. This is "the Church of the firstborn," whose names are "written in heaven" (Heb. 12:23); and those whose names continue there to the end of their course, and are not blotted out because of unfaithfulness (Rev. 3:5), will be admitted to full membership in the Church triumphant at the appearing and kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.—2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:7; 5:4.

The Lord himself keeps the Church books—the records of our names, and the individual accounts of each member: we have nothing to do with that. He enrolls all the truly consecrated believers, and **no power on earth can pluck them out of his hand, or blot their names from the records in heaven.** (John 10:28, 29; Rom. 8:35-39; Rev. 3:5.) His unerring wisdom alone is sufficient for that, and for all the duties of the office of the Head. It is therefore most unbecoming and reprehensible in any member of the body of Christ to become heady—to assume the authority of the Head of the Church. And such a one, if not speedily recovered by the discipline of the Lord, he will eventually cut off and cast out as unworthy of any place in his body. 2 Thes. 2:11.

(2) Another sense in which the Church may be considered—which also is a Scriptural sense (Philemon 2; Rev. 2:1, etc.)—is that of counting a part as though it were the whole. Thus all the living saints may be spoken of as the Church of today. Or again, any number of the living Church assembled together in any place may properly be called the Church of that place (**e.g.,** Philemon 2; Rev. 1:4; 2:1; 2 Cor. 11:28); for wherever even two or three are assembled, the Lord, the Head, has promised to be in their midst. (Matt. 18:20.) The general assembly will be when all the members are glorified with and united to the Head.

If any inquire how we know the members of the true Church, we answer, We know them by their profession of faith in Christ and by the Spirit of Christ manifested in them. It is his truth, and his spirit, and his presence manifested among them, that impels them to assemble together, that unites their hearts in the bonds of Christian love and fellowship, that inspires them with the same hope, animates them with the same joy, and leads them to co-operate together in the work of the Lord. . . .

Thus we see how thoroughly the true Church of Christ, is organized, under Christ, its Head, even in this probationary state, as we journey through the wilderness to our promised Canaan. We are all under the orders of our great Commander whom all must obey and follow who would reach the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Oh, no, we are not our own, and have absolutely no liberty to do our own will in any matter. All is subjected, even our very thoughts, to the will of God in Christ; and our membership in his Church is made dependent upon our faithfulness in recognizing this and in rendering cheerful, loving obedience. We cannot do as we please in any matter: we are strictly under law to Christ, whose holy spirit must rule our every deed and word and thought; and our constant effort must be thus to bring our every power and talent into subjection to him.

In this blessed bondage to Christ, a bondage of love, there is the highest sense of liberty, as, one after another, the shackles of sin drop from us. The world and its ideas and vain ambitions, and follies, and pride, and its superstitions and fears cease longer to fetter us, and the windows of our minds and hearts are thrown wide open that the glorious light of divine grace may stream in, and our hearts rejoice and sing. . . .

The Oneness of the Body of Christ

Before leaving this many-sided subject of order in the Church, **we would also briefly call attention to the Lord's design that the whole (living) Church, however widely scattered over the world, should be knit together as one.. It was so in the Apostle's days, and it should be so still.** It is a pleasant observation that, even with their limited means of communication, whenever there was opportunity the churches in one place were prompt to send Christian greetings and benedictions to those in other places (Acts 15:23; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Cor. 13:13; Phil. 4:21, 23; Col. 4:14, 15; 1 Pet. 5:13; Titus 3:15; 3 John 14); and all were subject to the same regulations instituted by the apostles, having the "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." Their earnest endeavor was to keep "the unity of the faith in the bonds of peace," and to avoid any schism in the body of Christ.—Eph. 4:3-13; 1 Cor. 12:25.

It is noticeable, too, what a beautiful unity of spirit and of faith, and what steady co-operation, there was among the apostles and elders of the early Church. They were all zealously endeavoring to preach "the same things," the "sound doctrine," of the truth of which they were fully persuaded. One was not endeavoring to eclipse another by getting up some brand new, patented theories of his own. Apollos was not endeavoring to discount the teachings of Paul; nor were the elders of the various little companies endeavoring to lead the sheep under their care into by-paths of speculation and vain philosophies. No, it was not so, though from time to time false teachers came among them with the evil spirit of vainglory attempting these things, to draw away disciples after them; but the true ones, on the contrary, were faithful to one another, as they were also to the Lord. Paul planted, and Apollos watered, and God gave the increase.

We are glad to say that this spirit prevails today, and we trust it will more and more prevail, till we all come in the unity of the faith to the stature of the fulness of Christ, as one body under the one Head, Christ Jesus, harmoniously co-operating together in the doing of his will under the direction of his Word, being knit together in love and full of zeal in the Lord's service.

Foregoing we have seen the beauty, simplicity and completeness of the organization of the Church whose names are "written in heaven." Its only ruler and Head, the Lord Jesus, is infallible; God has centralized the authority in his hands, and every one of its members is required to render loving, loyal and prompt obedience to him, not only in their words and conduct, but even in their very thoughts. He admits to membership, and, when needful, he excommunicates the disloyal, and "blots out" their names. . . .

The individual liberty of each member of the heavenly Church toward each other member, and the complete subserviency of each to the Lord only are characteristics of the Lord's organization which contrast sharply with those of human organizations. Z. '95: 259-267.

"Lest Ye Enter Into Temptation"

"Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."—Mark 14: 38.

IT seems peculiar that there should be greater liability of falling into sin at one season than at another; but nevertheless we have noticed for several years and have before called to the attention of others the peculiar force of temptations at the time of the Passover, every Spring. Year after year at this season we have noticed special liability of many or all to stumble or be offended. Let us, therefore, take earnest heed to our Lord's words, and earnestly watch and pray for others and for our selves; and let each one be on his guard not to cast a stumbling-block before his brother.—Rom. 14:13; Heb. 2:1.

It was at the Passover season that our Lord said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Then many of his friends and followers said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it? . . . and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?"—John 6:4, 51, 60, 66, 67.

It was at the Passover season that Judas bargained for the betrayal of our Lord,—and a little later on accomplished it.

It was about the Passover season that our Lord said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." (Matt. 26:38.) "I have a baptism [death] to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!"—Luke 12:50.

It was about the Passover season that our Lord took the disciples and began to explain unto them that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of the chief priests and scribes and be put to death (Matt. 16:21); and then Peter was tempted to forget that he was the disciple, and took the Lord and began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord. This shall not be unto thee." Thus also he tempted our Lord to repudiate his sacrifice, and brought upon himself the rebuke—"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."—Verses 22, 23.

It was while met to eat the Passover that the twelve got into a dispute as to which of them should be greatest in the Kingdom. They thus brought upon themselves our Lord's just rebuke, and induced the illustration of humility on his part by the washing of their feet.

It was when they had sung a hymn and gone out from the Passover that our Lord used to them the words at the head of this article, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation;" while he himself was in an agonizing battle, and with bloody sweat submitting his will to the will of God; and, praying earnestly, was strengthened.—Luke 22:39-46.

It was but a little later that the emissaries of the High Priest came upon them and the eleven all forsook the Lord and fled (Mark 14:50): the temptation, the fear, they could not resist.

It was but a little later that Peter and John, bolder than the others, went with the crowd into Pilate's court to see what would befall the Master; and Peter, being recognized as one of Christ's disciples, was tempted to deny the Lord with cursing.—Mark 14:68, 70, 71.

It was at the same time that our Lord was tempted before Pilate, but victoriously "witnessed a good confession."—1 Tim. 6:13.

The temptations of our Lord followed rapidly. When his foes spat upon him, and crowned him with thorns, and reviled him, saying, "Let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God," he could have smitten them with disease or death; but, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He overcame, and prayed for those who despitefully used him.—Luke 23:33-37.

He might even have concluded that he would not be the Redeemer of such thankless beings; but, while realizing that he could even then ask of the Father and receive the assistance of twelve legions of angels and overcome his enemies, he resisted the temptation. He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

The death of our Lord was a great trial of faith to all the disciples, who straightway were tempted to go again to their old fishing business, and neglect the fishing for men.—John 21:3-17.

Paul and the other apostles subsequently had special trials at this special season also. See Acts 20:16; 21:10, 11, 27-36.

In view of all this in the past, as well as in view of our own experience since the present harvest began in 1874, we feel specially solicitous for the Lord's sheep every Spring; **and this Spring is no exception.** What may be the character of the temptations, we may not clearly discern until they are upon us; for if we knew all about them in advance they would be but slight temptations. Watch, therefore, and pray always; for the only safe way is to be prepared; because your adversary, the devil, is seeking whom he may devour. He knows your weak points, and is ready to take advantage of them. We will each need the graces of the spirit in our hearts, as well as the Lord's "grace to help in time of need" if we would overcome. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation!"

"My soul, be on thy guard,
Ten thousand foes arise:
The hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the prize."
—Z. '94: 104-105.

The Easy Yoke

In tender sympathy for all the oppressed and sorrowing our Lord says, "come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you," etc. Thousands have responded to the kind invitation, and they testify in no uncertain terms to the ease of Christ's yoke and the blessedness of his promised rest. And yet the rest is not of general temporal prosperity and freedom from care and toil and from all restraint.

Few would say in viewing the Apostle Paul's experience that the yoke of Christ on his shoulders was an easy yoke, or that the burden of Christ's work which he bore was a light one. But evidently he thought so, for he counted it an inestimable privilege to endure hardness as a good soldier for Christ's sake. He joyfully suffered the loss of all things and counted them but dross, that he might win Christ and be found in him. He rejoiced to be made a partaker of his sufferings that he might also be made a partaker with him of his glory, and share with him in the blessed work of his Kingdom.

Blessed work! Paul gloried in the prospect of such a future mission, and was in haste to manifest his readiness of mind for it, by zealously and most energetically devoting his life here to the Lord's service along the lines indicated in the divine plan. He took Christ's yoke upon him; he did not attempt to guide himself, but humbly placed himself under subjection to Christ, and obediently followed his guidance whithersoever it led him—whether to prison and the stocks, to an ignominious public beating or stoning that left him almost dead, to shipwreck, to perils on land and sea, among heathen enemies or false brethren, to wearing labor, and painful toil, or what not? And yet Paul counted this burden of Christ a light one, and his yoke an easy yoke. He spoke of his trials as light afflictions, and said he rejoiced in tribulations: and with lacerated backs and feet fast in the stocks in the depths of a miserable dungeon Paul and Silas rejoiced and sang praises to God.

Stephen had the same rest and joy even while his enemies were stoning him to death; and thousands more of God's saints can testify to the same thing—in the midst of poverty, sickness, affliction, temptation, and enemies on every hand, and even in the flames of violent persecution. Whence comes it? or how are rest and even joy compatible with such conditions? The answer is; it is a rest of mind—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." None can know the blessedness of this rest until they have experienced it. And none can realize its great value until they have been put to the tests of affliction.

The Lord gives the key to this rest in the words —"and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart." Truly, in a meek and quiet spirit is the secret of rest. To be meek is to cultivate the graces of patience,of loving submission to the will of God; of abiding confidence in his love and care and in the wisdom of his guiding counsel and overruling providences; and to perseveringly pursue this course through evil and through good report, or through favorable or unfavorable circumstances.

Let the beloved children of God seek more and more to copy Christ's meek and quiet spirit, accepting the providences of God and obeying his precepts and leading as he did, armed with the strength which he alone can supply, and will, to all those who take his yoke upon them, and learn of him. Z. '96: 79.

Only those anointed of the spirit are to be recognized amongst the Lord's people as in any sense of the word representatives and mouthpieces of the head. All who are not in the attitude of full consecration to the Lord, **full submission to the divine will,** are in opposition, to some extent; and to the extent that they are in opposition they are wrong or wicked. "And unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do, to take my words into thy mouth, seeing that thou hatest instruction (refusing to submit themselves to the Lord's arrangement) and castest my words behind thee (neglectfully)?"—Psa. 50: 17. Z. '01: 395.

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The right path is **still** the "narrow path" of **self-abasement** and **self-denial**—the path of meekness and humility: and it will require as much effort and grace to walk in it this year as last, or possibly more. Z. '95: 3.

Not all of the blessings of the New Creation belong to the future—beyond the veil. A first-fruits of the Spirit, a foretaste of coming blessing, is granted New Creatures in the present life. F. 659.

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It was because Stephen had the truth, the right side of the controversy, and because God was with him, that he was more than a match for any of his adversaries.

The same God is still with his people; and the Lord's Word, therefore, is still worthy of all acceptance.—"I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries shall be able to gainsay or resist." (Luke 21: 15.) Do we not see this same principle illustrated today, when humble ones amongst the Lord's people are more than a match for all their adversaries? The truth being powerful, prevails, though it is not always acknowledged to prevail, even as it was not acknowledged by Stephen's enemies. Z. '02: 44.

The Christians Course Delineated

DAVID, the Prophet, in the first Psalm, has significantly marked out the proper Christian course and its blessings and outcome. In the first verse he designates three classes from whom the Lord's people should stand aloof—three classes with whom, if they have fellowship, it will be to their detriment. (1) The ungodly, or more properly, the wicked (margin, Leeser, Young). (2) Sinners. (3) The scornful. "Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."—Psa. 1:1.

Applying this Psalm prophetically, it is proper that we should determine what classes of persons are meant by the **wicked**, the **sinners** and the **scornful.** We suggest that under the terms of the present Gospel age, not murderers and thieves, etc., can be meant by the wicked, for such, generally at least, are deluded and "blinded by the god of this world," so that they have never seen the true Gospel light; and not seeing it they have not had such responsibilities in connection with it as would properly brand them as wicked from the divine standpoint. The "wicked" are to be looked for in the Church, and in harmony with this thought is our Lord's parable which, referring to the Church and the talents bestowed upon its members, declares respecting the one who received the talent of the Lord, but failed to use it—"Thou wicked and slothful servant." The "wicked" of this age would seem to be those who have enjoyed the light of divine favor, who have come to a knowledge of the truth, been made partakers of the holy spirit, etc., and who then, despite all these favors and blessings, and despite their covenant with the Lord to be his servants and to lay down their lives in his service, neglect the same.

The Apostle also points out a certain class in the Church as wicked, saying of them that if they fall away "it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance" (Heb. 6:6), "for it had been better for them that they had never known the way of righteousness, than that having known it they should turn from the holy commandment." (2 Pet. 2:21.) The same class is again described as those who sin wilfully after receiving a knowledge of the truth, and for whom, consequently, no further share in the sacrifice for sins remains; and consequently no hope for them in the coming age. (Heb. 10:26.) In a word, then, the wicked class of the present age would seem, from the Lord's standpoint, to be those **who have received clear light and knowledge respecting the divine plan, and who have either sinned wilfully by turning away from a life of righteousness to a life of intentional sin,** or those who repudiate the precious blood of Christ and the atonement made for them by the same, counting the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified a common or ordinary thing.

Those who would be of the class pronounced "blessed" of the Lord, in our text, must not follow the counsel of these "wicked," but, on the contrary, should stand firmly by the Gospel of the redemption, and seek no other. Let all who desire to be blessed of the Lord mark well this counsel and follow it, and have no fellowship whatever with the "wicked," nor in any degree walk after their counsels.

"Sinners" are mentioned as another class, separate and distinct from the "wicked" above referred to, and they are evidently a class whose transgressions are much less heinous in the sight of the Lord: these sinners we must look for in the Church also, not in the world. Since the world is not yet on trial there is nothing to demonstrate the standing of any of its people. The "sinners" of our text we would understand to be those who, without repudiating the covenant, without denying the Lord that bought them, and thus falling utterly from divine favor, are nevertheless failing to live according to the terms of their covenant, their consecration. These would seem to be sinners against the covenant they have made—those who fail to carry out the covenant of self-sacrifice. This class possibly includes some who are described by the Lord as "overcharged with the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches," and who for these reasons are sinners against their covenant, violators of it. The Lord's people who would be of the "blessed" of the Lord, and receive his ultimate "Well done," are not to stand with these covenant-violators even. To stand with them might imply to treat them as companions, to enter into their plans and schemes; and surely all who would thus do would be likely to become partakers of their spirit, and to become careless of their consecration vows, and overcharged with earthly cares and ambitions.

The "scorners" are designated as a still different class, and might possibly represent some not of the Church, but possessing more or less knowledge of holy things and rejecting them, speaking of them lightly and scornfully. The Lord's people are not to be intimately associated with such, nor make them their companions and friends. They cannot have fellowship with such without receiving injury; hence, so far as possible the Christian is to avoid this class. No one who could speak lightly or scornfully of our Heavenly Father or of our Lord Jesus or of the exceeding great and precious things set before the Lord's people in his promises, could be other than a hindrance to those who are seeking to gain the prize of our high calling. He therefore who would be blessed of the Lord, and who would attain that for which he was "called," should take heed to the instructions and avoid the scornful.

This does not signify, however, as the Apostle points out, that we are to have no dealings in the world with any but saints, for, as he tells us, in that event we would needs go out of the world (1 Cor. 5:10); but it does imply a recognition of the principle that evil is contagious, and that **the Lord's people cannot be too careful to avoid every contact with evil.** They should separate themselves to the Lord, to holiness, and seek to place themselves under influences in harmony with their holy and true and pure aspirations, begotten by the holy spirit.

The Prophet implies that those who have fellowship with the scornful and with covenant-breakers and with the wicked who deny the precious blood of the covenant, cannot be blessed of the Lord, because they are in a wrong attitude of heart; for, as his words imply, those who are in the right attitude of heart to be blessed of the Lord can readily find something much better, much more interesting, much more profitable, than fellowship with any of these classes; "Their delight is in the Law of the Lord, and they meditate in his Law by day and by night." . . . .

He finds that this Law of God contains, or is related to, every feature of the divine plan; and hence his meditations and studies of its various ramifications lead his thoughts hither and thither, in contact with all the exceeding great and precious promises which God has bestowed upon them that love him, both as respects the life that now is and also that which is to come. And the more this is his attitude the more is he blessed of the Lord; and the more blessed he is of the Lord the more surely will this be his attitude and experience.

—Z. '00: 280-282.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

Pure love is not to be cold and indifferent: it is to be so warm and so strong that we would be willing to "lay down our lives for the brethren."—1 John 3:16. With such a love as this burning as incense to God upon the altar of our hearts there will be no room there for any selfish, envious thoughts or words or deeds. Oh how blessed would all the gatherings of the "brethren" be, if such a spirit pervaded all of them! Can we doubt that, if it held sway in one-half or one-third or even one-fourth, it would speedily exercise a gracious influence upon all—for righteousness and fidelity and love and peace, and against envy, strife, malice, slanders and backbitings? Z. '99: 217.

◆

Whoever abstains from the popular (food) and defiled supply must seek and use the simple and undefiled food which the Lord in his providence supplies, otherwise their last state of spiritual starvation will be worse than the first. Z. '99: 167.

◆

Happy and blessed the person who, seeing faults in others, after careful examination finds himself to be entirely free from these. Such certainly are exceptional characters. Z. '07: 334.

◆

Conscience is one of our most valuable assets; according to our obedience to conscience will be our standing before the Lord. If, therefore, we violate our own consciences in anything we do, we are doing ourselves injury; or if by word or example we influence others to violate their consciences, however harmless a thing in itself it may be, we are doing them a serious injury, the outcome of which we cannot fully estimate. Z. '07: 334.

◆

"Charge not thyself with the weight of a year,
Child of the Master, faithful and dear;
Choose not the cross for the coming week,
For that is more than he bids thee seek;
Bend not thine arms for tomorrow's load—
Thou may'st leave that to thy gracious God;
Daily only he saith to thee,
'Take up thy cross and follow me'."—Z. '97: 78.

◆

It is indeed no easy matter to tread the pathway of humility, to continually check the human aspirations and to keep the sacrifice on the altar until it is fully consumed. Z. '93: 7.

The Scriptures assure us that the Lord desires that we should comfort one another and build one another up as members of the body of Christ. Nevertheless we should never neglect the throne of heavenly grace in personal interview with our Father and glorified Lord. Whatever of earthly companionship we may have, the Lord's companionship must never be underestimated or forgotten. Z. '06: 347.

◆

To be fully transformed into a likeness of character to our heavenly Father should be the **constant effort** of every true child of God. It is not enough that we gain a knowledge of his plan and a pleasurable realization of his mercy and grace toward our unworthy race, and that we joyfully tell the good news to others; and is not enough even that we exert ourselves with uncommon zeal to bless others with those good tidings of great joy for all people; for we may do all of these things and more, and yet, if we do not let our Heavenly Father's goodness and grace have its due effect upon our own hearts, our knowledge, and even our good works, will profit us but little. Z. '93: 67.

◆

As we are approaching the end of our course, the great importance of our Calling, its responsibilities and privileges, should be impressed more and more upon our hearts and minds. We are living in wonderful times. We know not what a day may bring forth. Then let us walk with great carefulness, with great soberness, yet with joy and rejoicing, knowing that our deliverance draweth nigh; and that, if faithful, soon with our Beloved Bridegroom we shall partake of the wine of joy in His Kingdom and be forever with Him. Z. '16: 87.

◆

Those who do not recognize the Lord's presence in the gathering of his people are apt to exercise an injurious rather than helpful influence upon others, and are less likely to get any profit for themselves. Let us more and more remember as we meet in the name of our Lord his promise, "Where two or three are met in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18: 19, 20.) Those who realize the Lord's presence amongst his people when they meet will be very careful of the words of their mouths, their actions and the very thoughts of their hearts: pride, vainglory, slander, and all evil things ("works of the flesh and of the devil") will be carefully shunned, if his presence is clearly realized by the eye of faith. Z. '99: 270.

"And the Lord hearkened and heard it." Thus he would represent to us his interest in our efforts to understand his plan, and to offer him in loving sacrifice the very best of everything that by his grace we possess. O, that as we meet (personally or through the printed page) we could always realize our Heavenly Father's interest in us and his willingness to bless our efforts in the study of his Word. Z. '99:270.

◆

Let us guard ourselves against the error of some who have great **faith in themselves,** and consider this a proof that they are of the "elect." Z. '99:29.

◆

The closer one is living to the Lord, the more will he love Brother Russell and the Truth which he stands for, the more love will he have for the brethren, and, as a consequence, the more God will love him. Z. '09:235.

◆

Oh, how the Adversary would like to convince us that our present Lord had served us with poisonous food and that we should straightway leave his table and go elsewhere to satisfy our hunger and thirst for righteousness and Truth. These and other efforts will be successful merely to the extent of sifting out those not worthy of the Truth. The others who remain will be stronger than ever. Z. '09:216.

◆

Let us worry less over each other and specially guard our own hearts in this evil day; lest any root of bitterness and fault-finding spring up to turn us aside. In a word, let us leave to God his supervising work and look for and thankfully use the opportunities he may be pleased to grant us in his blessed service. We "hold the Head" when we thus recognize the Lord's headship of his own work. Any other attitude is dangerous. Z. '09:81.

◆

"The Word of God is quick and powerful." (Heb. 4:12.) There is much need that this lesson be thoroughly learned by the Lord's people. Nothing can take the place of the Lord's Word; and all teachings, whether oral or printed, should be recognized as secondary to the inspired Word, and should be received only as corroborated by the Scriptures. Or rather, they are to be appreciated only as they unlock the treasures of wisdom hidden in the Bible. Z. '99:248.

◆

The day of reckoning is upon the Church—upon all who profess to be members of it: "The hour of his judgment is come." Who is **worthy to stand?** Z. '92:296.

◆

How wonderfully wise are the ways of the Lord; how blessed is his truth; how tender are his providences; how consoling is his mercy; and how rich are his abounding love and grace! And how glorious is the hope set before us in the gospel of ere long seeing him face to face and of being transformed into his glorious likeness, when, being like him, we shall not be overpowered with the glory or stricken with blindness. Z. '92:270.

The "New Creature" has need of grace and mercy because it has for its expression only the "earthen vessel," which is frail and prone to sin, weakness and error.

The New Creature cannot sin—wilfully—and it never had "Original Sin"; but it could be strangled by the old nature, if the latter were allowed to revive and regain the control. God recognizes the flesh as dead and deals only with the New Creature, which never knew sin and which never could love sin. Nevertheless, the New Creature has a responsibility for its earthly tabernacle, the body, just as a man has responsibility for the conduct of his dog. If he knows the dog to be vicious he must muzzle him. If he does not encourage the dog to do mischief, he is still responsible for him and liable for his depredations. So the New Creature is responsible for his body of flesh. Because he cannot fully control thoughts, words and actions, there are sure to be trespasses. And these must not only be fought against, but must be repented of—taken to the Throne of the Heavenly Grace for forgiveness. Here again the voice of grace is heard speaking peace through Jesus Christ the Redeemer, for the Redeemer through Divine arrangement is our Advocate. As such he is both able and willing to apply all that may be needed to make good our errors of weakness or ignorance. God's grace continues thus with us to the end of the journey, lending assistance at every step. Z. '10:89.

◆

God now permits false teachers to increase and multiply more and more, and to have such liberty that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. Even these enemies serve a purpose in testing and in sifting the true children of God from the false. Z. '92:319.

◆

Our expectation is that the battle for right, for Truth, will wax hotter and hotter. Those unwilling to trust the Lord and those who are confident of themselves might about as well surrender now as any other time. Be assured that only the faithful and the courageous overcomers will **stand** the testing of this evil day. But this will not discourage us, if we will trust in the gracious promises of our Lord that greater is he that is for us than all that are against us.

The Apostle calls particular attention to "perils amongst false brethren" in our day and he particularly pointed us to the heady and high-minded and told us that "Of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." Such things are to be expected. **Let us not be surprised, but on the alert to resist such besetments by increased humility.** It surely is a fact that those who once enjoyed the light of present Truth and who have left it seem thereafter more deficient of decency, reasonableness, honesty, manhood and womanhood than do worldly people, or those who have never seen the Truth. One might know how to calculate on what the worldly foe might do or say or insinuate, for they all have limits beyond which they would not think of going; but as for these false brethren, there is no calculating what they may do or say. Expecting such assaults, we need not be disconcerted but "trust in the Lord and do good." Z. '10:4.

Helpful Thoughts From The Volumes

They who love peace more than the truth will be tested, and they who love truth supremely will be accepted and approved as the "overcomers." B. 237.

◆

Those who have made the Most High their refuge need not fear the approach of such times (world-wide revolution and anarchy). He shall cover them with his feathers, and under his wings shall they trust; yea, he will show them his salvation. As the wildest confusion approaches they may comfort their hearts with the blessed assurance that "God" is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"; and say, "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed (though the present social order be entirely overthrown); and though the mountains (kingdoms) be carried into the midst of the sea (overwhelmed in anarchy); though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." God will be in the midst of his faithful saints, who make him their refuge, and they shall not be moved. God will help Zion early in the Millennial morning; she shall be "accounted worthy to escape all those things coming upon the world."—Psa. 46; Luke 21:36. D. 45-46.

◆

It is worthy of note that great human ability, oratory, etc., have been notably connected with other movements, but not with this present gathering to the Lord. Here the truth, the spiritual food which the Lord is supplying, is the whole attraction: human flourish and oratory find little room for exercise here; they are lacking but are not missed. D. 610-611.

◆

But the "saints" who shall be joint-heirs in the Kingdom, and associate judges,—Can they be safely trusted with absolute, autocratic power? Ah yes! as Christ Jesus proved that he had the Heavenly Father's spirit, and is "the express image of the Father's person," so all who will be of that "little flock," his joint-heirs in the Kingdom, will have been proved to have "the spirit of Christ"—the holy spirit of Love. It is one of the terms of their "call," that they should become "copies of our God's dear Son," and none others will be accepted as having made their calling and election sure. Indeed, it is in order that they may be able to sympathize with those who will then be under their care and instruction, that these are being selected from among the weak and imperfect, and being taught what it is to fight a good fight for right and truth against error and sin. Yes, the under priests, as well as the Chief Priest, of the Royal Priesthood can be trusted without a fear. God will entrust the power to these and this is the best of guarantee that it will be used justly, wisely, lovingly,—for the blessing of the world. D. 636.

Not numbers, but quality, is the Lord's test. D. 644.

◆

Heart-loyalty to the Lord will mean continual effort to bring all the conduct of our lives, yea, the very thoughts and intents of our hearts, into subjection to the divine will, (Heb. 4:12.) This is our first duty, our continual duty, and will be the end of our duty because, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." "Be ye holy; for I (the Lord) am holy." (1 Thess. 4:3; 1 Pet. 1:16). Absolute holiness is to be the standard which our minds can gladly and fully endorse and live up to, but to which we will never attain actually and physically so long as we are subject to the frailties of our fallen natures and the besetments of the world and the Adversary. F. 136-137.

◆

Only those will run the race to the finish who set their affections on the things above, and not on the things beneath. The perseverance of the saints springs from a full consecration of heart; all others will fail so to run as to obtain the great prize. D. 608.

◆

Our Heavenly Father is evidently determined that none shall be of the bride company except such as realize clearly their own nothingness. C. 200.

◆

As iron sharpeneth iron, so our energies on behalf of others bring blessings to ourselves. F. 137.

◆

Wherever we look we can recognize the fact that God's consecrated people are being specially fed and enlightened at the present time. D. 591.

◆

If now the Christ is complete, as we believe, and ready to be born into the Kingdom, we should not be surprised at anything that might look like our repudiation at the Father's hands. If He pours the cup, it will only be because He knows that we can drink it, and because He wishes to prove to angels and to men that we are worthy of the honors He is to give us.—Lu. 22:42, 43; 1 Tim. 1:16. G. 127.

◆

Only in proportion as we learn to appreciate the divine perfections, and our own deficiencies, can we appreciate the many and important lessons to be learned, and the necessity for the trying experiences we are required to undergo. E:231.

◆

A godly life is always a reproof to the ungodly, even where no word of Truth may be possible or proper. E:294.

◆

The measure of self-sacrifice and sufferings for Christ, endured by each of the consecrated, becomes a measure (from God's standpoint—for man cannot always discern it) of the faithfulness of each as ambassadors. E:490.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER TWENTY-NINE

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ELIJAH TAKEN UP IN A WHIRLWIND

THE words, "When the Lord would take up Elijah," suggest that Elijah had a specially protected life—that it was not subject to the power of his enemies—that he was wholly under divine control. And this is true also of the antitypical Elijah class of this Gospel age. It was true, we remember, of the great Head of this class, Jesus in the flesh. The scribes and Pharisees made many attempts at his life before the successful one, but could not harm him previously because "His hour had not yet come." So with every member of his body in the flesh, every member of the Elijah class—not even a hair of their heads could fall without divine notice and permission. These are not to esteem that any of their affairs are accidental, for being fully consecrated to the Lord and fully accepted by him, all of their affairs, great and small, are under divine supervision—their health or sickness, their rights or privileges, their joys or sorrows.

We are not in this wishing to intimate fatalism, but rather a divine supervision. If trials and disciplines and corrections, either of poverty or sorrow or ill health, be necessary for the correction of these they will surely have them; and some or all of these may come to them even though not as chastisements, but as lessons of experience necessary for their development for places in the Kingdom or for their usefulness in the Lord's service in the present time—as was the case with our Lord. Those who are of the Elijah class, fully consecrated to the Lord, will be glad to have this divine supervision of their affairs and will rejoice in it. This, however, would not mean that they may not and should not do whatever would appeal to them as being wise and reasonable for the maintenance of their health or its recovery, for the satisfying of their hunger or thirst, or for the betterment of their temporal interests. But while using what to them may appear to be reasonable means, they will consider that these also are all in the hands of the Lord, and, if successful, that they are his provision, to be accepted with thankfulness; while, if unsuccessful, they will be willing to accept the results without murmuring—with full assurance of faith that God is able to make all things work together for their good.

—Z. '04:251-252.

ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at O'Brien Hall, Vancouver, B.C., Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 26th, 27th and 28th, 1920. The Convention Hall is situated at the corner of Hastings and Homer Streets. Two meals will be provided daily for all conventioners, and free accommodation has been arranged for all the Lord's poor. Reception Committee will meet all boats and trains. For further information please write Brother George H. Biddle, 816 12th Avenue West, Vancouver, B.C. Phone Number, Fairmont 3443.

LOVE'S ALCHEMY

"Love is the filling from one's own
Another's cup.
Love is a daily laying down
And taking up;
A choosing of the stony path
Through each new day
That other feet may tread with ease
A smoother way.
Love is not blind, but looks abroad
Through other eyes;
And asks not, 'Must I give?' but, 'May
I sacrifice?'
Love hides its grief, that other hearts
And lips may sing;
And burdened, walks that other lives
May, buoyant, wing.
Brother, hast thou a love like this
Within thy soul?
'Twill change thy name to saint when thou
Dost reach this goal." —Z. '15:263.

THE BLESSINGS OF TRIBULATION

"I will be with him in trouble," is the promise. The intimation here is that the Lord will not, necessarily, prevent our getting into trouble. We might see the trouble coming and pray to the Lord, but He might not deliver us from the trouble. And we should not ask that we might be spared the affliction if His Wisdom sees it is best for us to have it. The trouble might prove very beneficial to us.

The Lord has already told us in His Word that we are to rejoice even under tribulation; for tribulation, rightly received, will work out for us a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." So while the Lord does not promise us that we shall escape trouble, He does promise that **with** the trouble He will give His children consolation of heart, sustaining grace, that will enable them to rejoice in the midst of their tribulation. (2 Cor. 4:6-18; 12:9, 10; Isaiah 43:1, 2.) This was exemplified in our Lord Jesus and in the Apostles. Paul and Silas were able to sing praises to God in prison with their feet fast in the stocks and their backs bleeding from the whippings which they had received. They could rejoice in tribulation for Christ's sake.

The Lord is ever with His people; therefore they should not be discouraged. His children have the comfort and assistance of the letter of the Truth and the spirit of the Truth. But they have all these blessings only in proportion as they are willing to exercise faith; for the glories promised are not yet theirs in reality; these are theirs only by promise now. Z. '15:264.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER TWENTY-NINE

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18:51.

Thoughts on the Memorial Season

"For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."—1 Corinthians 11:26.

THE Passover season, as celebrated by the Jews, is approaching, beginning this year on the 2nd of April, after 6 p.m. But the interest of Christians in this season centers especially in the slaying of the lamb, which preceded the Passover Feast, and which typified the Lamb of God, Christ Jesus. Our celebration of this Passover season, therefore, relates to the great Antitype. At this time we as Christians commemorate the greatest event of all history, the sacrificial death of the Savior of the world. Our celebration this year properly begins on the evening of April 1st, after six o'clock, which is the beginning of the 14th of Nisan.

The Israelites were commanded to celebrate the Passover as the first feature of the Law and as one of their greatest memorials as a nation. Therefore we find that in some degree the Passover is celebrated by Jews in all parts of the world, even by those who claim to be agnostics. They still have a measure of respect for the Passover as an ancient custom. But is it not strange that with the bright minds which many of our Jewish friends possess, they have never thought it worth while to inquire as to the meaning of this celebration?

Why was the Passover lamb slain and eaten? Why was the blood sprinkled upon the door-posts and lintels? Of course, God so commanded; but what was the reason, the motive, behind the Divine command—what lesson, what object? Truly a reasonable God gives reasonable commands; and in due time Jehovah will cause His faithful people to understand the significance of every requirement. If the Jew can realize that his Sabbath Day is a type of a coming Epoch of rest and blessing, of release from toil, sorrow and death, why cannot he see that similarly all the features of the Mosaic institution were designed of the Lord to be foreshadowings of various blessings, to be bestowed **"in due time"**?

First-Fruits and After-Fruits

Blessed are those whose eyes can see that Jesus was indeed "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"; that the cancellation of the world's sin is to be effected by the payment of man's penalty, by the application of Jesus' sacrificial merit in due time for the sins of all mankind. Only the Church have as yet received of the merit of Jesus' death. Greatly favored are those who can see that as the whole world lost Divine favor and came under Divine sentence of death, with its concomitants of sorrow and pain, so it was necessary that a satisfaction of Justice should be made before this sentence, or curse, could be removed; and that therefore, as the Apostle declares, "Christ died for our sins"—"the Just for the unjust," that He might bring us back to God. Thus He opened up a new way—a way to life everlasting.

The Scriptures call the Church of Christ "the Church of the First-borns," "a kind of First-fruits unto God of His creatures," "the First-fruits unto God and the Lamb." (Hebrews 12:23; James 1:18; Rev. 14:4.) These expressions imply that ultimately there will be others of God's family **later** born; they imply **after-fruits**. Christian people in general seem to have overlooked these Scriptures, so far as making application of them is concerned, and have generally come to believe that only those are ever to be saved who are designated in the Bible as the **First-fruits**—that there will be no **after-fruits**.

But the Passover type indicates that it was God's purpose to save all Israelites; and that as a nation they represented all of mankind that will ever come into harmony with God and be granted everlasting life in the Land of Promise. Let us note that there were two Passovers—the one in which only the first-borns were passed over; and another greater one at the Red Sea, when by Divine Power the whole nation of Israel was miraculously delivered and led across the channel of the Sea especially prepared for them by the accentuation of winds and tides. These passed over dry-shod and were saved; while the hosts of Pharaoh, representing all who eventually will go into the Second Death, were overwhelmed in the Sea. The passover at the Red Sea pictures the ultimate deliverance from the power of sin and death of every creature of Adam's race who desires to come into accord with the Lord and to render Him worship, all who will ever become a part of Israel; for not one Israelite was left behind in Egyptian bondage.

Responsibility of the First-Borns

But this passover is not the one which we are about to celebrate. We are to celebrate the antitype of the passing over of the first-borns of Israel by the angel, in the land of Egypt. Only the first-born ones of Israel were endangered on that night in Egypt, though the deliverance of the entire nation depended upon the salvation, the passing over of those first-borns. So only the First-borns of the sons of God from the human plane, the Church of Christ, are now being passed over; only these are in danger of the destroying angel. These are all under the sprinkled blood.

We see, in harmony with all the Scriptures, that the "Little Flock," "the First-fruits unto God of His creatures," "the Church of the First-borns," alone is being spared, passed over, during the present. We see that the remainder of mankind who may desire to follow the great antitypical Moses, when in the Age to follow this He shall lead the people forth from the bondage of Sin and Death, are not now in danger of eternal destruction—only the Frst-borns.

The Church of the First-borns are those of mankind who, in advance of the remainder of the race, have had the eyes of their understanding opened to a realization of their condition of bondage and their need of deliverance and to God's willingness to fulfil to them all of His good promises. Furthermore, they are such as have responded to the grace of God, have made a full consecration of themselves to Him and His service, and in return have been begotten of the Holy Spirit. With these it is a matter of life or death whether or not they remain in the Household of Faith—behind the blood of sprinkling.

For this class to go forth from under the blood would imply a disregard of Divine mercy. It would signify that they were doing despite to Divine goodness; and that, having enjoyed their share of the mercy of God as represented in the blood of the Lamb, they were not appreciative of it. For such, the Scriptures declare, "There remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins"; "Christ dieth no more." They are to be esteemed as adversaries of God, whose fate was symbolized in the destruction of the first-borns of Egypt. The Church of the First-borns, through the begetting of the Holy Spirit and the greater knowledge and privileges which they enjoy in every way, have a far greater responsibility than has the world; for they are the only ones yet in danger of the Second Death. This is the lesson of the Passover type, and applies only to true Christians.

By and by the night of sin and death will have passed away, the glorious Morn of deliverance will have come, and The Christ, the antitypical Moses, will lead forth, will deliver, all the people of God—all who, when they shall come to know, will be glad to reverence, honor and obey the will of God. That Day of Deliverance will be the entire Millennial Age, at the close of which all evil and evil-doers, symbolized by the hosts of Egypt, will be utterly cut off in the Second Death—destruction.

Jesus Our Passover Lamb

The Apostle Paul clearly and positively identifies the Passover Lamb with our Lord Jesus, saying, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast." He informs us that we all need the blood of sprinkling, not upon our houses, but upon our hearts. We are to partake of the Lamb; we must appropriate to ourselves the merit of Christ, the value of His sacrifice; we must also eat of the unleavened bread of Truth, if we would be strong and prepared for the deliverance in the Morning of the New Dispensation. Thus we put on Christ, not merely by faith; but more and more we put on His character and are transformed into His glorious image in our hearts and lives.

We are to feed on Christ as the Jews fed on the literal lamb. Instead of the bitter herbs, which aided and whetted their appetites, we have bitter experiences and trials which the Lord prepares for us, and which help to wean our affections from earthly things and to give us increased appetite to feed upon the Lamb and the unleavened Bread of Truth. We, too, are to remember that we have here no continuing city; but as pilgrims, strangers, staff in hand, we are to gird ourselves for our journey to the Heavenly Canaan, to all the glorious things which God has in reservation for the Church of the First-borns, in association with our Redeemer, as kings and priests unto God.

Our Lord Jesus also fully identified Himself with the Passover Lamb. On the same night of His betrayal, just preceding His crucifixion, He gathered His Apostles in the upper room, saying, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." It was necessary that as Jews they should celebrate the Passover Supper on that night—the night of the anniversary of the slaying of the Passover Lamb in Egypt, of the saving of the typical first-borns from the typical "prince of this world"—Pharaoh—the same date on which the real Passover Lamb was to be slain. But as soon as the requirements of the type had been fulfilled, our Lord Jesus instituted a new Memorial upon the old foundation, saying, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

Primary Signification of the Bread and the Cup

We recall the circumstances of the first Memorial—the blessing of the Bread and of the Cup, the fruit of the vine; and our Lord's declaration that these represented His broken body and shed blood, and that all His followers should participate, not only feeding upon Him, but being broken with Him; not only partaking of the merit of His blood, His sacrifice, but also laying down their lives in His service, in co-operating with Him in every and any manner, that they might later share all His honor and glory in the Kingdom. How precious are these thoughts to those who are rightly in tune with our Lord!

In presenting to the disciples the unleavened bread as a memorial, Jesus said, "Take, eat: this is My body." The evident meaning of His words is, This symbolizes, or represents, My body. The bread was not actually His body; for in no sense had His body yet been broken. In no sense would it then have been possible for them to have partaken of Him actually or antitypically, the sacrifice not being as yet finished. But the picture is complete when we recognize that the unleavened (pure, unfermented) bread represented our Lord's sinless flesh—leaven being a symbol of sin under the Law, and especially commanded to be put away at the Passover season. On another occasion Jesus gave a lesson which interprets to us this symbol. He said, "The Bread of God is He which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world." "I am the Bread of Life." "I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever; and the Bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."—John 6:33, 35, 51.

101 In order to appreciate how we are to eat, or appropriate, this living Bread, it is necessary for us to understand just what the bread signifies. According to our Lord's explanation of the matter, it was His flesh which He sacrificed for us. It was not His prehuman existence as a spirit being that was sacrificed, although that was laid down and its glory laid aside, in order that He might take our human nature. It was the fact that our Lord Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners—without any contamination from Father Adam, and hence free from sin—that enabled Him to become the Redeemer of Adam and his race, that permitted Him to give His life "a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time."—1 Timothy 2:3-6.

When we see that it was the pure, spotless nature of our Lord Jesus that was laid down on behalf of sinners, we see what it is that we are privileged to appropriate. The very thing that He laid down for us we are to "eat," appropriate to ourselves; that is to say, His perfect human life was given to redeem all the race of man from condemnation to death, to enable them to return to human perfection and everlasting life, if they would; and we are to realize this and accept Him as our Saviour from death. The Scriptures show us, however, that if God would consider all past sins cancelled, and should recognize us as having a right to human perfection, this still would not make us perfect, nor give us the right to eternal life.

In order that any of the race of Adam might profit by the sacrifice of Jesus, it was necessary that He should rise from the tomb on the Divine plane of life, that He should ascend to the Father and deposit the sacrificial merit of His death in the hands of Justice, and receive from the Father "all power in Heaven and in earth." As relates to the world, it was necessary also that in the Father's due time He should come again to earth, a glorious Divine Being, then to be to the whole world a Mediator, Prophet, Priest and King, to assist back to perfection and to harmony with God all who will avail themselves of the wonderful privileges then to be offered.

It is this same blessing that the Gospel Church of this Age receive by faith in their Redeemer; namely, justification by faith—not justification to a spirit nature, which we never had and never lost, and which Christ did not redeem; but justification to human nature, which Father Adam possessed and lost, and which Christ redeemed by giving His own sinless flesh, His perfect human life, as our Ransom-sacrifice. The partaking of the unleavened bread at the Memorial season, then, means to us primarily the appropriation to ourselves, by faith, of justification to human life-right—a right to human life—with all its privileges, which our Lord at His own cost procured for us. Likewise the fruit of the vine symbolizes primarily our Savior's life given for us, His human life, His being, His soul, poured out unto death on our behalf; and the appropriation of this by us also signifies, primarily, our acceptance of Restitution rights and privileges secured by our Lord's sacrifice of these.

Deeper Significance of the Loaf and the Cup

Now let us note that God's object in justifying the Church by faith during this Gospel Age in advance of the justification of the world by works of obedience in the Millennial Age, is for the very purpose of permitting this class who now see and hear, who now appreciate the great sacrifice which Love has made on man's behalf, to present their bodies a living sacrifice, and thus to have part with the Lord Jesus in His sacrifice—as members of His Body. This deeper meaning of the Memorial He did not refer to directly. It was doubtless one of the things to which He referred when He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit, when it, the Spirit of Truth, shall come, it will guide you into all Truth, and will show you things to come."—John 16:12, 13.

This Spirit of Truth, the power and influence of the Father bestowed through Christ, speaking through the Apostle Paul, clearly explains the very high import of the Memorial; for St. Paul says, writing to the consecrated Church, "The Cup of blessing for which we give thanks, is it not the participation of the blood of Christ? The Loaf which we break, is it not the participation of the Body of Christ?"—the sharing with Christ as joint-sacrificers with Him even unto death, that thereby we might be counted in with Him as sharers of the glory which He has received as the reward of His faithfulness?—"For we, being many, are one Loaf and one Body."—1 Corinthians 10:16, 17.—Emphatic Diaglott.

Both views of this impressive ordinance are very important. It is essential, first of all, that we should see our justification through our Lord's sacrifice. It is proper then that we should realize that the entire Christ, the entire anointed company, is, from the Divine standpoint, a composite Body of many members, of which Jesus is the Head (1 Corinthians 12:12-14), and that this Body, this Church, as a whole must be broken—that each member of it must become a copy of the Lord Jesus and must walk in the footsteps of His sacrifice. We do this by laying down our lives for the brethren, as Jesus laid down His life—directly for His Jewish brethren, but really for the whole world, according to the Father's purpose.

It is not our spiritual life that we lay down, even as it was not Jesus' spiritual life that He laid down. As He sacrificed His actual, perfect being, His

humanity, so we are to sacrifice our justified selves, **reckoned perfect** through Jesus' merit, but not **actually** so. Likewise the Loaf and the Cup represent **suffering**. The grains of wheat must be **crushed** and **ground** before they can become bread for man; they cannot retain their life and **individuality** as **grains**. The grapes must submit to the pressure that will extract all their juices, must lose their identity as grapes, if they would become the life-giving elixir for the world. So it is with the Christ company, Head and Body. Thus we see the beauty and force of St. Paul's statement that the Lord's children are participants in the one Loaf and the one Cup. But it is **His** blood, the virtue of **His** sacrifice, that counts. **Our** blood has virtue only because of His merit counted to us, only because we are members of His Body.

Our Lord distinctly declares that the Cup, the fruit of the vine, represents blood; that is, life—not life **retained**, but life **shed**, given, yielded up—sacrificed life. He tells us that this life poured out was for the remission of sins; and that all who would be His must drink of it, must accept His sacrifice and appropriate it by faith. They must receive life from this source. It will not do for any to claim an immortality outside of Christ. It will not do to declare that life is the result of obedience to the Law. It will not do to claim that faith in some great teacher and obedience to his instructions will amount to the same thing and bring eternal life. There is no way to attain eternal life other than through the blood once shed as the Ransom-price for the whole world. "There is none other name given under Heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.) Likewise there is no other way by which we can attain to the new nature than by accepting the Lord's invitation to drink of His Cup, and to be broken with Him as members of the one Loaf, to be buried with Him in baptism into His death, and thus to be with Him in His resurrection to glory, honor and immortality.—Romans 6:3-5; 2:7.

The Celebration in the Kingdom

On the occasion of the institution of the Memorial Supper, our dear Lord, as usual, had something to say about the Kingdom, the theme of His every discourse. Those to whom He had promised a share in the Kingdom if faithful, He reminded of His declaration that He would go away to receive a Kingdom and to come again and receive them to Himself to share in it. He now adds that this Memorial which He was instituting would find its fulfilment in the Kingdom, that He would no more drink of the fruit of the vine until He should drink it anew with them in the Father's Kingdom.

Just what our Lord meant by this statement might be difficult to determine positively, but it seems not inconsistent to understand Him to mean that as a result of the trials and sufferings symbolized in His Cup, there will be jubilation in the Kingdom. "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." He will look back over the trials and difficulties endured in faithful obedience to the Father's will, and will rejoice in these as He sees the grand outcome—the blessings which will come to all mankind. This jubilation will be shared by all His disciples who have drunk of this Cup, first in justification, then in consecration and sacrifice with Him. These have His promise that they shall reign with Him; and when the reign shall have begun, when the Kingdom shall have been established, looking back they shall praise the way that God has led them day by day, even unto the end of their earthly course, and even though it has been a "narrow way," a way of self-sacrifice, a way of self-denial.

Our dear Master's faith stood the test of all these trying hours which He knew to be so near the time of His apprehension and death. The fact that He rendered thanks to the Father for the bread and the cup is indicative of a joyful acquiescence in all the sufferings which the breaking of the bread and the crushing of the grapes implied. Already He was satisfied with the Father's arrangement. In line with this spirit was the singing of a hymn as they parted, a hymn of praise no doubt, thanksgiving to the Father that His course on earth was so nearly finished, and that He had found thus far grace sufficient for His need.

In considering the events of those solemn hours which followed the Memorial Supper, let us follow the Redeemer to Gethsemane, and behold Him "with strong cryings and tears" praying "unto Him who was able to save Him out of death"—expressive of our Master's fear of death lest in some particular He might have failed to follow out the Father's Plan, and therefore be thought unworthy of a resurrection. We note that our Lord was in some way comforted with the assurance that He had faithfully kept His consecration vow, and that He would surely have a resurrection as promised.

We behold how calm He was thereafter, when before the high priest and Pilate, and Herod and Pilate again. "As a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth" in self-defense. We see Him faithful, courageous to the very last; and we have His assurance that He could have asked of the Father and could have had more than twelve legions of angels for His protection. But instead of petitioning for aid to escape His sacrifice, He petitioned for help to endure it faithfully. What a lesson is here for all His footstep followers!

On the other hand, we recall that even amongst His loyal disciples the most courageous forsook the Master and fled; and that one of them, in his timidity, even denied his Lord! What an occasion is this for examining our own hearts as respects the degree of our own faith, our own courage and our willingness to suffer with Him who redeemed us! What an opportunity is thus afforded for us to buttress the mind with the resolution that we will not deny our Master under any circumstances or conditions—that we will confess Him not only with our lips, but also by our conduct.

Our Opposition to Be From Religious World

We are shocked with the thought that it was Jehovah's professed people who crucified the Prince of Life! and not only so, but that it was the leaders of their religious thought, their chief priests, Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of the Law, rather than the common people, who were responsible for this dreadful deed. We remember the Master's words, "Marvel not that the world hate you; for you know that it hated Me before it hated you." We see that He referred to the religious world; and realizing this, we know that it will be the religious world that will hate us, His followers. We are not to be surprised, then, that opposition to the Truth and persecution of the light-bearers should come from the most prominent exponents of so-called Christianity. This fact, however, should not cause us to hate either our own opponents or those who persecuted our Lord to the death. Rather we are to remember the words of the Apostle Peter respecting this matter: "I wot that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."—Acts 3:17.

Ah, yes! Ignorance and blindness of heart and mind is at the bottom of all the sufferings of Christ—both Head and Body. The Father permits it to be so now, until the members of the Body of Christ shall have filled up that which is behind of the afflictions of their Head. (Colossians 1:24.) Soon, as our dear Lord declared, those who now partake of His broken body and are broken with Him in the service of the Truth, those who now participate in His Cup of suffering and self-denial, will drink with Him the new wine of joy in the Kingdom, beyond the veil. With that glorious Morning will begin the great work for the world's release from the bonds of sin and death—the great work of uplifting, the "Times of Restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:21.

The thought before the mind of each of those who participate in the Memorial service should be that expressed in the words of St. Paul, "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him; if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him"; "for our light afflictions, which are but for a moment," "are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:18.) With these thoughts respecting the passing over of our sins as the First-borns through the merit of the precious blood, and our share with our blessed Lord in all His experience of suffering and of glory, we may indeed keep the Passover feast with joy, notwithstanding the trials and difficulties. So doing, continuing faithful as His followers, very soon we shall have the great privilege of leading forth the Lord's hosts—all who ultimately shall hear and know and obey the great King—out of the dominion of sin and death, out of Egypt into Canaan.

The Coming Anniversary

We do not advise the leaving of the smaller groups to meet with larger companies, but rather that each little company, or band, meet together as is its usual custom; for this seems to have been the course of the early Church. Let us "keep the Feast," with joy of heart, but with due appreciation of its solemnity, not only as relates to our Lord's sacrifice for us, but also as relates to our own covenant to be dead with Him. We recommend that the leaders of each company make arrangements to obtain unleavened bread, and either unfermented grape juice, or raisin juice, or other fruit of the vine Our recommendation is against the use of fermented wine.

We recommend that these little gatherings be without ostentation. Decently, orderly, quietly, let us come together, full of precious thoughts respecting the great transaction we celebrate. Let us not have our attention too much taken up with forms and ceremonies. Let us in this, as in all things, seek to do that which would be pleasing to our Lord; and then we shall be sure that the service will be profitable to all who participate.

We have heretofore suggested that none are to be forbidden to partake of the emblems who profess faith in the precious blood and full consecration to the Lord. As a rule there will be no danger that any will accept the privilege of this fellowship who are not earnest of heart. Rather, some may need to be encouraged, since wrong views, we believe, are sometimes taken of the Apostle's words concerning those who "eat and drink damnation (condemnation) to themselves, not discerning the Lord's body." (1 Corinthians 11:29.) For the sake of these timid ones, who, we trust, will not forego the privilege of commemorating this great transaction, we would explain that to our understanding the class mentioned by the Apostle is composed of those who fail to realize the real import of the sacrifice, and who recognize this service as a mere ceremonial form. The failure to investigate and learn what this signifies, brings condemnation, reproof.

We trust that the occasion will this year be a most precious and profitable one to all the saints. As we are approaching the end of our course, the great importance of our Calling, its responsibilities and privileges, should be impressed more and more upon our hearts and minds. We are living in wonderful times. We know not what a day may bring forth. Then let us walk with great carefulness, with great soberness, yet with joy and rejoicing, knowing that our deliverance draweth nigh; and that, if faithful, soon with our Beloved Bridegroom we shall partake of the wine of joy in His Kingdom and be forever with Him. Z. '16:83-87.

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"Who shall be able to STAND?" This is the question: Who shall be so thoroughly established in love that the trials and testings, necessary to prove him so, will be passed successfully? According to this we are not to wonder if various special trials are permitted now to come, thick and fast—trials which will test and prove our loyalty to the Lord and to the principles of love. Z. '10:262.

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Let us find comfort, peace and joy as well as caution in the assurance that if our hearts are loyal, God by myriads of agencies is able and willing to keep our poor heads! Z. '09:376.

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We are reminded of the words, **"It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance,"** if they fall away from the Truth, after once having seen and enjoyed it. It is notable, too, that such, as a rule, lose all fear of Second Death. Their eyes of understanding on this, as well as on other features of the Plan, grow dim. Our sorrow for them would be unspeakably deep, were it not that we realize that "The Lord will judge his people" and that we are in the day of which he has foretold us—when the sifting and shaking and purging of his people is due to take place. When we realize that "he doeth all things well," and makes no mistakes, it convinces us that we might have greatly erred in the past respecting heart condition, or that changes of character can be speedily effected under the bite, the poison, the sting, of pride, envy, slander, etc. Z. '09:103.

The Agony in Gethsemane

Mark 14: 32-42;—Matt 26: 36-46; Luke 22: 39-46; John 18: 1.

"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

AS WE consider the solemn scenes of this lesson, let it be with reverence and deep gratitude, remembering it was our load the Master bore, that it was the chastisement of our peace that was upon him, and that with his stripes we are healed.

The narrative, so familiar to every Christian, is one full of precious lessons, especially to those who, by his grace, are endeavoring to follow in the Lord's footsteps. We observe (1) that when the Master realized that his hour of betrayal and fierce temptation was close at hand, having first comforted, counselled, and prayed for and with his disciples, his next strong impulse was to seek a solitary place for prayer and communion with God, that he might find grace to help in time of need. (2) We note also his love for his disciples, and his desire for their love and sympathy in return. "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end." And because he loved them, and knew that they loved him, he permitted them to accompany him to the place of prayer, that they might watch and pray with him. Leaving all but Peter and James and John at the entrance of the garden, as a sort of outer guard against the sudden intrusion of his betrayer upon his last hour of prayer, he advanced with the three—the three in whose ardent natures he seemed to find the most active and consoling sympathy—and, with an earnest appeal to them to watch and pray, he left them and went about a stone's throw beyond. Three times did he rise from prayer and return to them in anguish of soul to feel the touch of human sympathy, saying, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." It was a sorrow, an agony, which, of itself, would have worn him out shortly—an intense mental and nervous strain which caused him to sweat great drops of blood.

It was no sign of weakness in the Master that he thus craved human sympathy. His was no coarse, stoical nature, insensible to pain and shame and loss; nor was it a proud, self-centered nature which stood aloof from human fellowship, although those with whom he associated were so far beneath his glorious perfection. Gracefully he condescended to men of low estate, and esteemed them brethren beloved, of whom he was not ashamed. His was a refined nature, keenly appreciative of all that is lovely and pure and good, and correspondingly sensitive to pain from everything to the contrary of these. Human degradation and human woe must continually have borne heavily upon him during all his earthly life. But in this awful hour all the griefs and burdens of the whole world were rolled upon his shoulders, and he was to suffer as though he himself were the sinner—to suffer death, extinction of being, trusting alone in the Father's grace for a resurrection. Into this one hour were crowded, not only the mental realization of death and the physical agony and shame, the cruelty and torture of a horrible death, but also the sense of desolation to be experienced when even his beloved disciples, overcome by fear and dismay, should forsake him; and the sorrowful reflections upon the irretrievable loss of Judas, and upon the course of the Jewish nation—"his own" people, who despised him and were about to call down upon their own heads the vengeance of his blood, saying, "His blood be upon us and on our children." He foresaw the terrible calamities that in consequence must soon overwhelm them. Then the degradation of a whole guilty world, which must continue to groan and travail in pain until by his sacrifice he should gain deliverance for them from sin and death, caused him to feel the burden of responsibility to an extent which we can only approximate, but cannot fully comprehend. And in addition to all this was his knowledge of the fact that every jot and tittle of the law with reference to the sacrifice must be perfectly fulfilled according to the pattern in the typical sacrifice of the day of atonement. If he should fail in any part of the work, all would be lost, both for himself and for men. And yet, though a perfect man, he realized that the flesh, however perfect, was unequal to the task.

How much depended upon our Lord's fortitude in that awful hour, alone and defenceless in the darkness of overwhelming night, awaiting the certain arrival of his betrayer and the will of his persecutors maddened with hate and full of the energy of Satan! Oh, how the destinies of the world and of himself seemed to tremble in the balances! Even the perfect human nature was not equal to such an emergency without divine aid, therefore it was that he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him who was able to save him from death, by a resurrection. The necessary comfort was provided through the Prophet Isaiah (42: 1, 6), by whom Jehovah said, "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: . . . I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee [from falling or failure], and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles. . . . He shall not fail nor be discouraged."

When the fearful ordeal in Gethsemane strained the powers of endurance almost to their utmost tension his prayer was only, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." Then, though the cup might not pass from him, an angel came and ministered to him. Just how, we know not, but probably by refreshing his mind with the precious promises and prophetic pictures of the coming glory, which none of his disciples had sufficiently comprehended to thus comfort him in this hour when the gloom of thick darkness settled down upon his soul, crowding out hope and bringing a sorrow exceeding great, "even unto death." Ah, it was Jehovah's hand upholding him, blessed be his holy name! according to his promise, that he might not fail nor be discouraged.

The result of that blessed ministry was a reinforced courage which commands the deepest admiration. It was not a courage born of stoical indifference to pain and shame and loss, but a courage born of that faith which is anchored fast within the vail of the divine promises and power. With his eye of faith upon the glorious victory of truth and righteousness, when he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied—satisfied with the eternal joy and blessedness of a redeemed world, with the welcome and wealth of the Father's blessing, and the love and gratitude of every loyal creature in heaven and in earth—yes, comforted and encouraged thus with a realizing sense of the rewards of faith and faithful endurance to the end, he could now calmly and even courageously, go forth to meet the foe. Yes, this was the victory by which he overcame, even his faith, and so we also are to overcome.

Now commenced the realization of the dreadful forebodings of Gethsemane. Mark his calm, dignified fortitude, as he addresses Judas and the Roman soldiers, and its effect upon them. They were so overpowered with the grandeur and nobility of this wonderful man that they could not have taken him had he not voluntarily placed himself in their hand. Notice, too, his kind consideration for the bewildered and weary disciples, and his loving excuse for them, "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak," and his request to the Roman soldiers at the time of his arrest that they might be permitted to go their way (John 18:8), that so they might escape sharing in his persecutions. So through all the trial and mocking, and finally the crucifixion, his courage and solicitude for the welfare of others never failed.

As we thus view our Lord under a trial so crucial, and mark how the hand of Jehovah upheld him, let it strengthen the faith of all who are endeavoring to walk in his footsteps, to whom he says, Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world: and this is the victory that overcometh, even your faith. (John 16:33; 1 John 5:4.) Has not the Lord, Jehovah, commissioned his angels also to bear up the "feet" of the body of Christ, lest at any time they be dashed against a stone (lest some overwhelming trial should prove too much for them)? (Psa. 91:11, 12.) Yes, as surely as his hand upheld the Head, our Lord Jesus, so surely will he bear up the feet. "Fear not, little flock: it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom," though through much tribulation ye shall enter it. The angels are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. Though their ministry is unseen by us, it is not therefore unreal, but potent for good. Our fellow-members, too, in the body of Christ are all the Lord's active messengers to each other, thus in turn sharing the privilege of bearing up the feet.

But to have this help in time of need we must invoke it. Every day and every hour is indeed a time of need; hence our necessity of living in an atmosphere of prayer—to pray without ceasing. And if the Lord needed often to seek retirement from the busy scenes of his active life to be alone with God, to keep the close bond of loving sympathy established, surely we need to do so; and in so doing we shall always find grace to help in time of need. In seasons of heavy trial the darkness may indeed so deepen upon the soul, as in our dear Lord's case, as almost to shut out the stars of hope; yet if, like the Lord, we hold on to the omnipotent arm of Jehovah and meekly say, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done," his grace will always be sufficient; and with the Psalmist we can say, Though my flesh and my heart fail, yet God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever (Psa. 73:26); and, with the Lord, our hearts will respond —"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Z. '95:95-96.

Self Examination

IN 2 Cor. 13:5, Paul says, "Try your own selves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Or know ye not, your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" The context apparently shows that the Corinthians had accused Paul of having no influence over them for good, and his ministry as being weak and insignificant. Paul replies by telling them to look at their present condition as compared with their past, see the change that has taken place in their lives, see the possession they now have, and in the light of these things let them say whether his influence over them has been for good or not, or if his ministry is weak and insignificant. Again, in 1 Cor. 11:28, the same Apostle says, "Let a man examine himself." But in this Paul means only to interpose a caution to prepare the receiver to eat the Lord's supper worthily.

It is impossible to know ourselves by looking at the present. We only partly know ourselves as we see our life in the past. Every day our actions surprise us, and frequently we find that we have done the very thing we never thought we would do. I suppose Abraham did not really know the strength of his faith till called upon to sacrifice Isaac. In the light of that trial he could estimate the real strength of his faith. In the shortness of memory we fail to profit by past mistakes. In every action of ours there are so many details giving rise to so many causes of actions which may differ in each action, thus making it impossible for us to judge truly of our own condition. The Greeks had a favorite motto among their philosophers, "Know thyself;" but by this they did not mean to teach that by merely looking into their own actions they came to understand their own character and became able to estimate their real worth, but rather that each one should examine the basis and facts of his philosophy for himself, and not be content to receive them second-hand. Then, again, many people do not grow better from rigid self-introspection. The bad only see good and excuses for the evil in their lives. The good only see evil in theirs, and sadden their lives by deploring it. One of the saintliest women I ever knew, and whom all reverenced, began to direct her attention to her own life, to examine it, to search it, and to question whether she did truly believe or not, till in a few months she concluded she had no faith, that her life was full of evil deeds, that she was

unsaved and had no hope, and that there was none for her; and in this state she lives today.

We make a distinction between **heart-searching** and life-searching, which many fail to make. Our hearts, that is our **wills**, should be perfect; but our lives cannot be perfect, because "we have this treasure [our new wills or new hearts] in earthen vessels [in imperfect bodies]." He, therefore, who judges of his acceptableness with God by judging of his perfection or imperfection in thought, word and deed, must condemn himself, if he be honest and if he have a proper estimate of perfection in these respects. But he that judges his **heart**, his motives, his will, his intentions, should always be able to find it **true** to the Lord,—however much his life may come short of his new will,—the mind of Christ begotten in him by the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word.

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The Glory of the Church to be Perpetual

IT IS our thought that the divine nature, the divine plane, has been promised only to the Anointed One, and when the Anointed One shall be complete it will be impossible to add to his members. To suppose additions would be as unreasonable in our judgment, as to think that after a man had grown up and become a king he should develop another foot. When the Body of Christ shall be complete—when the "Elect" number shall be full—we understand there will be no **additions** to it, just as there will be no **deficiency** in that Body when it shall be glorified. **This nature of glory, honor and immortality of the Kingdom plane seems to appertain only to the Father, to the Son and to the "Bride, the Lamb's Wife."** We know of nothing in the Scriptures nor in analogy that would imply that it could be shared by any others at any time; but of course what God has not clearly revealed we may not know of a certainty. We may be sure of one thing, however, and that is that Christ will **always** be **"Head over the Church which is his Body"**; that he will always be Head over all things.

Another thing we may be quite sure of is that the Church thus honored by the Father as members of The Christ will have still other glories; as the Apostle declares, "that **in the Ages to come,** God might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ" (Eph. 2:6, 7), **implying not only that the glory of Christ is to be** perpetual, but that the glory of the Church is also to be perpetual—not confined to the Millennial Age.

Does the Degree of Suffering Determine the Degree of Reward?

We agree that our Lord's statement respecting John the Baptist, "He that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he" (Luke 7:28), applies to the entire class of Ancient Worthies; and further, that it refers not merely to the earthly status of the Gospel Church as being superior, but marks the Church as a superior class in the future.

This question might arise: In view of the statement of the Apostle James, "Take, my brethren, the Prophets, as an example of suffering affliction and of patience" (Jas. 5:10), and in view also of our Lord's words referring to the suffering of the Church, "So persecuted they the Prophets which were before you," and also of the detailed statement of these sufferings of the Ancient Worthies furnished us by the Apostle Paul (Hebrews 11), what should we say as to the degree of their sufferings in comparison with those of the Church and the reward that would justly be due them as compared with the reward of the Church?

The Gospel Age the "Acceptable Day" for Sacrifices

We answer that if the Lord intends to reward his people in proportion to their suffering, some of us seemingly will get a very small reward. We have neither been stoned to death, nor sawn asunder, nor have we wandered in sheepskins and goatskins; nor have we been without any place to lay our head. We might say, however, that some of our sufferings may be of a different kind from theirs: It is possible to endure figurative scorching or stoning, and to have our names cast out as evil, etc. But on the whole we cannot say that, so far as merit is concerned in the matter of suffering, there is any advantage that the Church can claim over the Ancient Worthies even among those of our number who, in the early Church, were burned as torches by Nero. It would seem that we must make allowance for

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Jesus Betrayed and forsaken
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Divine "election": that it pleased God to call us with this High Calling. During the Millennial Age even some may perhaps become as loyal to the principles of righteousness as any of the Ancient Worthies or any of the Church, and yet not be rewarded with either their distinction or ours. We are favored, we believe, only in that we live at this particular time of blessing—"the acceptable day of the Lord"—in which the Lord is ready and willing to accept our sacrifices; and this acceptable day could not begin until our Lord Jesus had made his sacarifice and opened up "the new and living way," whereby we might follow in his steps.

John the Baptist had a very honorable work to perform, but that work was to be accomplished before our Lord's death and before the opening of this "acceptable day." Therefore he could not be of the Gospel Age Church and did not come under our "High Calling"—joint-heirship with our Lord in the Kingdom of Heaven.—Z. '10: 237.

"The Bond of Perfectness"

"And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness."—Col. 3: 14.

THE Apostle says love is the bond of perfectness; and Jesus said love is the fulfilling of the divine law. Every intelligent being, from the humblest to the most exalted, craves love. The dog craves his master's affection and expresses his delight at every indication of it; a horse and even a cat will return your caresses; the birds reward your love with notes of joy; the lisping infant rewards your love with smiles and caresses. The young want to be loved; the middle aged, in the heat and strife of life's great battle, want the soothing solace of loving sympathy; the aged, weary and worn with the strife of years, want to lean upon the strong arm of love. The angels in all the glory of their higher state want it; our Lord Jesus wants it; and our heavenly Father wants it. We never grow weary of it; nor can we get too much of it.

It is not merely weakness that craves love; but strength and glory want it, too. What is this desirable thing so universally craved by every grade of intelligent being? It is one of those things which pen cannot describe. People may sing about it, and talk about it, and read about it, and write about it, and yet have but a faint idea of its reality. But stop reading and writing and talking for a moment, and call to mind the few living illustrations of love that have chanced to cross your pathway. In the long past years of sunny childhood can you recall the tenderness of Mother's love that covered your dimpled cheeks with showers of kisses that could not half express the wealth of her affection? And do you not recall the tenderness of Father's care, who patiently toiled and sacrificed, and then delighted to see in you the fruit of his labor? Or perhaps you have tasted the sweets of conjugal love, and have realized in the chosen partner of your life one ready always to rejoice in your prosperity, to share your burdens and to cheer and urge you on to life's truest and highest attainments.

Or in a dark hour of sorrow and tears some tender hand has soothed your throbbing brow, some kindly ministry has strengthened your weakness, or some timely word of cheer, of counsel and encouragement has inspired you with new zeal for the stern conflict of life. What life has been so barren and drear that no such gleam of sunshine has ever brightened the pathway? Such illustrations give us some idea of what it is to be loved.

Then again consider for a moment the joy of loving—the joy of loving your own sweet child, or the manly glory of your noble husband, or the womanly grace of your devoted wife, or the tender sweetness of your sainted mother, or the ripened glory of your aged father, or the blessed communion of tried and faithful friends—the communion of saints. Then, rising above these earthly loves, some have tasted the sweets of that divine love that surpasseth all other loves. As yet, however, that divine love is only manifest to those who have faith in the divine promises and who walk in obedience to the divine commandments.

Now with these illustrations of what it is to love and to be loved, let our imaginations widen the sphere of this noble virtue, and do we not see that, when it reigns in all hearts, it will prove to be just what the Apostle says it is—viz.: "the bond of perfectness," and the greatest of all the Christian virtues? Indeed he shows that, though we might have all the other virtues combined, yet, lacking this one, we would be as sounding brass and as tinkling cymbals. **In fact, the putting on of the other virtues, except as prompted by this virtue, would be mere sham and hypocrisy.** Yet with this, though lacking the others to some extent, the heart would prove itself loyal, though the flesh might be weak to perform the dictates of love.

The Lord is saying a great deal for this virtue when he declares that love is the fulfilling of the law; or in other words, that if we had perfect love, we could easily and naturally keep the whole law of God. But here is our difficulty: we cannot love perfectly. Well, the Lord knows that we cannot, but he wants to see us endeavoring to love more and more, and making actual progress in this direction. Paul, too, shows us how love in the heart manifests itself in the outward life. We scarcely need to be told this, for the language of love is natural and its impulses are spontaneous; and yet, because we are not yet perfect in love, Paul's description makes manifest the absurdity of calling that love which is unworthy of the name. He says, "Love suffereth long and is kind. [It is kind even to the unthankful and the unholy, endeavoring to show them by exemple a more excellent way.] Love envieth not. [It is pleased rather to see another's success.] Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. [There is no pride in love, delighting in display and vain glory: it is rather humble and retiring.] Love doth not behave itself unbecomingly. [It is consistent with its profession in all its actions]; seeketh not its own [is not on the alert for self-interest, but more for the interest and blessing of others]; is not easily provoked [endeavors to make due allowance for the weaknesses of others]; thinketh no evil [is slow to impute evil motives, and anxious to see and to foster every good intent]; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth [has no pleasure in either hearing or telling evil tidings, or in evil of any kind, but delights in God's truth and in its fruitage of developed holiness]."

"Love covers all things [makes due allowance for the weaknesses of the flesh]; believes all things [believes in the conquering power of love to help the weak and erring in the struggle against sin]; endures all things" [endures the necessary reproach and trials of faith and patience in the careful endeavour to build up and strengthen the weak].

The child of God who is studiously endeavoring thus to manifest and cultivate the spirit of love will indeed become more and more like his blessed Master. What contradiction of sinners against himself did he bear! How patiently he bore with the weaknesses and the short-comings of his disciples! And how faithfully he taught them and led them to follow in his steps! There was the perfect pattern of that self-sacrificing love which was set for our imitation.

Well, says one, as he looks into this beautiful law of love, I would like to be fully actuated by such a noble principle, but some people are so despicably mean that I cannot love them. But are you sure you cannot love such people? Is it not rather the sins that you dislike and which ought to be despised by every heart that is truly loyal to God and righteousness? You say it is hard to distinguish between the two; and so it is sometimes, when inherited deformities of character have been fostered and cultivated and even gloried in, as they often are. But here is a way to examine the real disposition of your own heart toward such. Would you cheerfully do them kindness and help them to the extent of your ability to see the error of their way and to overcome it; can you tenderly pray for them and patiently bear with their weaknesses, their ignorance and their lack of development, and try by a noble example to show them a more excellent way? If such be the case, then it is the sin that you despise, and not the sinner. The sin you should hate, but the sinner, never. Not until God's unerring judgment declares that the sin and the sinner are inseparably linked may love let go its hold upon a brother man.

Love, however, properly differs, both in kind and in degree, according to the worthiness of the object upon which it centers. There is a love of admiration, a love of sympathy and a love of pity. The former is the highest type of love, and is properly bestowed only upon that which is truly lovely and worthy of admiration. On this line our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus claim our supreme and most ardent affection; and all the good and noble and true of our fellow men, in proportion as they approximate the glorious likeness of God, may also share this love of admiration. Of this same kind is the love of childish innocence; and of this same kind should be the love of conjugal felicity.. The chosen life partner should be one beloved in this highest sense; and parental and filial affection should also be established on the same basis, and then the dearest earthly relationship would be akin to the heavenly.

The love of sympathy we can extend to the weakest one that is painfully toiling up the hill of difficulty toward a better life; and affectionately we may reach the sympathizing, helpful hand to such. If we are a step or two in advance of some such on the way, and if we realize a little less difficulty in making the ascent, let us thank God and use our superior vantage ground for the assistance of the weaker ones.

Then there is the love of pity for those so steeped in ignorance and sin as to be unable even to raise their eyes heavenward to catch the first inspiration toward a better life. Would we indeed scorn the degraded, or add another pang to those already so bruised by the fall? Ah, no: love pities the vilest, sympathizes with the weakest and glories in the truest and purest and loveliest of earth and of heaven. Thus our blessed Lord loved supremely our all-glorious Heavenly Father; thus he loved with tenderest sympathy his devoted disciples; and thus he loved with wondrous pity all the fallen sons and daughters of Adam's race, even to the extent of giving his life to redeem them. Let us emulate his example and walk in his footsteps. Z. '91: 139-141.

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The pure love of Christ in our hearts knows no man after the flesh, and puts no confidence in the flesh; it recognizes the inherent depravity of the old nature and keeps the flesh under the heel of the new nature. Consequently, its disposition is the very reverse of undue familiarity: it is dignified, simple, pure, and maintains always that proper reserve with the opposite sex which is approved even by the world, and which much more becometh saints. The manifestations of love among the saints should rather be after the manner indicated in Rom. 12:10 —by "in honor preferring one another," and by such kindness as is entirely consistent with the most refined modesty and purity. In such a state of mind and heart, sisters will prefer to exchange their confidences and intimacies with their husbands or with sisters, and brethren with their wives or with fellow brethren; thus no reproach will be brought upon the cause of Christ. Z. '93: 301-302.

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God has never authorized any one to go into debt for him, and such a faith has no backing in God's Word. On the contrary, he instructs his people not to go into debt; but he says, "Owe no man anything." A good plan is to always live within our income. And, if possible, to "lay by in store that we may have to give to him that needeth." Z. '97: 267.

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The hour of victory is a more dangerous one than the hour of distress; the heart is more apt to be proud and self-conscious and to feel its own importance. Z. '10: 380.

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If we permit any rival to occupy the mind and heart that was solemnly consecrated to him alone, then we are unfaithful to him and wickedly despising our covenant. Let the language of every consecrated heart be, "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." Z. '95: 220.

The Reward of the Righteous

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."—Dan. 12: 3.

IN CONSIDERING who are the wise here referred to we are forcibly reminded of Paul's significant inquiry—"Where is the wise? where is the scribe [who boasts of his wisdom]? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching [i.e., the preaching of this foolishness] to save them that believe." (1 Cor. 1: 20, 21.) And these believers are the truly wise ones to whom the Prophet makes reference.

Those who so thoroughly believe the testimony of God as to yield themselves fully to his will are wise indeed. They have prudently chosen that good part which shall not be taken from them. In this present evil world, it is true that, like their Lord, they have tribulation: but if they endure it as good soldiers, faithful unto death, their eternal reward is sure. The reward promised is beyond this vale of tears, and the valley of the shadow of death. Then these that suffered here, meekly bearing the reproach of Christ; who took up their cross daily, and followed him; who nobly adhered to the principles of truth and righteousness, and faithfully conformed their lives thereto; who delighted themselves in the Lord, and daily meditated in his law; who devoted themselves faithfully to the doing of his will, sacrificing their own,—these shall by and by shine forth as the sun, as the brightness of the firmament, in the Kingdom of their Father.

O, weary ones, look up; sad hearts, be glad; for even now your deliverance is nigh, even at the doors! Soon the sorrows of this earthly pilgrimage will be ended, and your glory will appear.

It is a very noticeable fact, that the nearer we approach to the consummation of our glorious hopes, the opposition of the powers of darkness grows more and more severe as well as more subtle. And those who walk by faith alone must indeed have a very strong faith to be able to wage a successful warfare to the end, and win the victor's crown of glory. To this end, dearly beloved, let us keep these precious promises of God ever in mind. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

While this glory that excelleth is to be manifested by and by in the overcoming gospel Church, there is a lesser, but nevertheless a great, glory to be manifested in all the lovers and doers of righteousness in all the ages past. Faithful Noah, a preacher and doer of righteousness; faithful Abraham, with whom the Lord's will was always paramount; faithful Enoch and Elijah and Moses and Aaron and Joshua and Caleb, and a host of others, of whom the world was not worthy, shall by and by gleam forth in the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God, as the stars forever and ever.

When righteousness is finally established in the earth, and men have learned to appreciate the pure, the beautiful and the good, when generous love shall have displaced all selfishness, then indeed will the good deeds and blessed influences of those who, in the midst of sin and wickedness, sought to turn many to righteousness, come into remembrance and receive from all men their just reward of appreciation and praise.

How refreshing the prospect of the glorious consummation of the divine plan! Let us rejoice and be glad, and daily strive to prove ourselves worthy of the glory promised to them that love God, to the called according to his purpose. Z. '96: 65-66.

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The thought of special trial, special temptation from the Adversary at this season of the year, seems to have been the foundation for the Lenten Season, a period of special restraint, fasting and prayer, which has come down to us through the oldest channels of Church history. The fact that with many today the Lenten Season is a mere formality does not mean that it is so or that it was originally so. Strongly would we recommend the fasting and prayer at all times enjoined in the Scriptures; and we suggest that, if possible, alertness be especially exercised by all the consecrated during the forty days preceding the Memorial. Z. '16: 119-120.

◆

The living faith, the unfeigned love, the long suffering meekness, the childlike simplicity, coupled with the constancy and zeal of maturity, make manifest the sons of God, and we need no earthly record, for the names of such are written in the Lamb's book of life. Z. October '88: 6.

At no time in the Church's history has our great adversary been so active in multiplying false doctrines and in diverting attention from the truth by introducing unprofitable and irrelevant questions as at present. Just when the exaltation and glory of the Church are soon to be accomplished, and when the faithful are about to be received into the joy of their Lord, every device is resorted to to beguile them of their reward and to frustrate this feature of the divine plan. To really frustrate any part of the divine plan is impossible: God has purposed to take out from among men a "little flock," "a people for his name," a royal priesthood; and such a company is assuredly being gathered. Z. '92: 230.

◆

It may not be amiss that we remind our readers that for some reason which we cannot explain it has for years appeared to us that Satan is granted special power to tempt the Lord's consecrated people at this Passover season. Z. '11: 75.

In the midst of the "perilous times' of this "evil day' and of the warning voices of prophets and apostles pointing out snares and pestilences and subtle dangers on every hand—and in the midst, too, of a realizing sense of the actual existence of such evil besetments and perils—how precious to the saints are the assurances of divine protection and care and personal love.

We call to mind the gracious promises of our Lord—"The Father himself loveth you;" "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom;" and "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him; . . . and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. . . . Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."—John 16:27; 14:21, 23, 27; Luke 12:32.

But warning voices and wholesome counsel are also necessary; and he is not wise who turns a deaf ear to them, and takes cognizance alone of the comforting assurances which are designed only for those who faithfully "watch and pray lest they enter into temptation." Every soldier of the cross needs to heed the Apostle's warnings—"Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand." Z. '92:227.

◆

Every child of God should be especially on guard against the little things—the things that seem like jokes, which sometimes do more harm in the Church than things which appear great: the little insinuations, that often leave a sting; the jesting about sacred matters, turning Scriptural passages into jests; the little acts of selfishness, etc. These things and many others which by careful thought each one may note really do much damage. Z. '16:119.

◆

Note his (Paul's) faithful warning against false teachers, who would surely develop in their midst; against wolves in sheep's clothing, who would not spare the flock while selfishly seeking their own temporal advantage. The Apostle did not counsel the handling of these wolves very gently, as some teachers of today advise. He did not say, you must call them all brethren, and tell them they are probably as near the truth as you are, and that you have a broad charity for all sorts of vain philosophies, etc., etc. No, Paul was not the man for such compromises. Rom. 16:17, 18; 2 Thes. 3:6, 14; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 Tim. 2:15-19. Z. '93:222.

◆

Who then shall succeed in condemning these whom God approves, whom God justifies, whom God declares to be right and acceptable to him through Jesus Christ? Others may claim that they are actually as nearly perfect as some of the faithful "elect," but the difference is that whereas God must reject all to any degree blemished, these have the covering of his Grace in Christ and are accepted according to their intentions and endeavors; and, therefore, they shall be able to stand, for he is able to make them stand in their testing or judgment.—Rom. 14:4. Z. '02:233.

A proper allegiance to the Lord should lead us to hide ourselves, that all the glory and honor might go to the great Author of the Plan of Salvation, and to the great Redeemer. Z. '09:325.

◆

Those who seek to use liberty for themselves, those who boast they have a mind of their own, and will of their own, know not how dangerous is their position, and that surely they will succumb eventually to the wiles of the Adversary and to the ensnarements of sin. Only those who follow the course of full consecration to the Lord are wise. Z. '05:61.

◆

Whoever is careless and inattentive to little things is not fit for the great honor the Lord has in store for the wholly faithful. Z. '15:235.

◆

Our grandest opportunities for service are comparatively insignificant. But we are to appreciate even the least service which we may be able to render. Z. '15:235.

◆

The Scriptures most distinctly assure us that only by unceasing faithfulness will any be permitted to continue to be reckoned as members of that elect company, foreknown and prearranged of God. Z. '00:37.

◆

The whole world today is bent on pleasure. It is sought in various directions, in hunting, fishing, theater-going, money-making, in home, family, etc. —legitimately and illegitimately; but of the many who seek pleasure and joy, but very few find it; even the little found usually leaves a bitter taste in the mouth. The real finding of pleasure is in finding the Lord and coming into proper heart harmony with him. There is no other peace or joy or love so delicious, so soul-satisfying as that which comes from fellowship with the Creator through the Lord Jesus Christ; and this joy, as the Master said, he alone can give, and none can take it away from us. Z. '11:140.

◆

One sin leads to another unless promptly acknowledged. Z. '94:29.

◆

If the experiences and sentiments of the "little flock" are beyond the ken of the natural man, his neighbors and friends, is it any wonder? Despised and rejected of men, they are nevertheless God's royal priesthood: "as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold they live"—a life more abundant. In all these things they have cause to rejoice, realizing that the path in which they tread has in it the footprints of him who redeemed them and became the leader and forerunner of this priesthood. The world knows us not, even as it knew him not. Z. '00:365.

◆

Communion with the Lord in prayer brings increased confidence in the Lord's supervision of our affairs; increased faith in all the exceeding great and precious promises of his Word; increased realization of his leadings, past and present; increased love for all the brethren of Christ, and increased solicitude for their welfare and spiritual progress. Z. '00:268.

The plan of reading twelve pages of the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES each day, tried by so many, results in more Bible study than any other way that we know of. . . . We would suggest that merely **reading** twelve pages of the SCRIPTURE STUDIES would not be **studying** in the proper sense of the word—neither studying the Bible nor studying the SCRIPTURE STUDIES. A proper study would be to think of the meaning of every word and every sentence. The thought is, it is not to see **how much** one can read, but to make sure that one goes no further than he comprehends or understands, whether that means one page or twenty pages. Z. '10: 297, 299.

◆

If my tongue be bridled, it will hold its peace when it cannot speak well and wisely. Z. '94: 72.

◆

Yes, our present divine recognition as sons of God is the surest evidence we can have of his recognition when we shall have finished our course. If today we have his manifest approval and fellowship, and if these mortal bodies are quickened into loving, active zeal both to know and to do the will of God, we may also look forward with joyful anticipation to that blessed time when we shall see the Lord and be like him. Z. '96: 115.

◆

The Master illustrates that we shall judge those professing to be his disciples by the general fruits of their lives. Are they sharp, thorny, injurious, poisonous in their influence upon others, or are they helpful, strengthening, uplifting? As a tree may be known and graded by its fruitage, so also may a man be known—and especially such as profess discipleship, such as profess to be followers of Christ and taught of him. Z. '10: 74.

◆

The obedience of the Church is the extreme of obedience—even **"unto death."** Z. '16: 37.

◆

In proportion as the covenant of consecration has been scrupulously kept, may the final assurance of acceptance be strong. And as in Paul's case, it may amount to positive assurance, because of positive and continuous faithfulness. Z. March, '88: 8.

◆

It was because David was full of faith in God and possessed of the spirit of obedience to Him that he was called a man after God's own heart—not that he was perfect—not that he always did the Lord's will, but that the Lord's will was his real heart's desire; and whenever through weakness of the flesh he took a different course, he was prompt to repent on seeing the mistake, to implore Divine forgiveness and to change his course. Z. '15: 122.

◆

Another danger to the Lord's consecrated people lies along the lines of worldly-mindedness—neglecting the things of the Kingdom in favor of the things of this present life, **Our Adversary is still alert.** We, also, must me alert as children of the Light, children of the Day. Z. '15: 101.

◆

The Lord's sheep, abiding in perfection of relationship with Him, will lack nothing. Their every need will be supplied. Z. '15: 91.

THE MARVELOUS GRACE OF GOD!

This is a wonderful work, a marvelous transformation! Selected from a race of bondslaves of sin, beings of a fleshly nature, depraved, death-stricken, sin-cursed, we are lifted out of the miry clay; we are washed, cleansed, from our pollution, our soiled rags of unrighteousness, and a new nature has been begun in us. Then our earthward tendencies are gradually bent Heavenward. We are transformed day by day, rising **up, UP**, until, our resurrection completed, the work of transformation fully accomplished, we are exalted to heights unimaginable—passing the nature and rank of angels, of cherubim, of seraphim, and every name that is named, and seated upon Messiah's Throne, beside the Infinite Son of God, partakers of His glorious nature—the nature of Jehovah Himself—the Divine nature!

Can mortal man conceive so marvelous a glory? The very thought of such a Calling should cause us to bow our hearts in the dust before our God, realizing our great unworthiness of such stupendous grace—of bliss so transcendent! What can we render unto the Lord that can fittingly demonstrate our gratitude, our thankfulness, for so unspeakable a favor? Surely, the most faithful service we can give is but a very feeble return to Him who has so loved us, so blessed us, so honored us! Z. '16: 55.

◆

"It is easier to find a score of men wise enough to apprehend the truth, than one intrepid enough to **stand** up for it in the face of opposition." Z. April, '85: 5.

◆

Every time we **stand firm** for righteousness under temptation we are demonstrating our loyalty to God in accordance with our Covenant of sacrifice. Z. '10: 215.

◆

Sometimes the Lord's hand is **very heavy.** It was in the case of our Lord Jesus, heavy, **pressed down.** But when the Lord felt the Father's hand pressing down, He meekly bowed Himself beneath the weight, in humble acquiescence to the will of the One whose purpose He had come to carry out. But the hand did not crush Him, although it seemed to do so. Instead of being a crushing it was the Hand of Love, testing His obedience to the full. When His obedience was fully tested, the same Hand lifted Him up and "set Him at His own right hand in the Heavenly places; far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."—Ephesians 1: 20-23.

Thus it will be with us, if we are found faithful. God will exalt us in due time. But He cannot exalt any who are not humble. Submission indicates faith. We would not submit ourselves unless we had absolute confidence in God. And not **faith only**, but **loyalty** also, is necessary. Therefore the Father tests us in these two qualities. Without these, we would be quite unfit for the Kingdom; and so the various tests of the present time are tests of faith and loyalty to God, and of ENTIRE SUBMISSION to His will. Z. '16: 36-37.

Helpful Thoughts From The Volumes

Faithfulness, love, zeal will be the tests. Those who have talents and bury them in the earth, in business or pleasure or sloth, will thus show lack of love and appreciation—and consequently unworthiness of the Kingdom, and will not enter "the joys of the Lord," nor be permitted to reign with him in the blessing of the world. "F," page 419.

◆

The making of our "calling and election sure" will mean great and eternal riches of grace to those of us who shall attain; and the loss of such blessings will of itself be no small punishment for carelessness in respect to the covenant relationship and becoming contaminated with the world and its spirit. "F," page 75.

◆

He who goes about to justify himself attempts the impossible, and the sooner he learns it the better. Our reckonings with the Lord should be day by day; and if the difficulty be considerable or only a light one, and the heart of the consecrated one is very tender and accustomed to continual communion and fellowship with the Lord, he will find a blessing in retiring to the throne of grace promptly as soon as any difficulty arises, waiting not even for the close of the day. But certainly nothing should be carried over night, when the throne of grace is open to us at all times; to neglect it would be to show a disposition contrary to that which the Lord's Word inculcates. "F," page 147.

◆

Under present conditions, the New Creature cannot in all matters do as it would prefer, but must in certain affairs be governed by the obligations of the flesh, because the divine injunction is to "provide things honest in the sight of all men"; and further "He that provideth not for his own hath denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."—Rom. 12:17; 1 Tim. 5:8. In view of these facts it will be readily seen that the new will has an arduous task before it: (1) To please God in the accomplishment of the sacrifice of the flesh; (2) to discern distinctly which appetites and demands of the fleshly relationship should be considered, and allowance made for them; (3) to what extent these demands and concessions may properly be made without infringing upon and invalidating the covenant,—which is unto life or unto death—"For if we live after the flesh we shall die; but if through the Spirit we do mortify (kill) the flesh we shall live"—eventually attain perfection in the resurrection. Here arises another difficulty. The flesh does not voluntarily die; it must be put to death by the will, the mind, the New Creature; and so, finding that there are certain allowances to be made, according to the will of God, the flesh is very apt to take advantage of these allowances, and to claim not only greater allowance than the "things needful," but also liberties and rights along lines which are not obligations, and which would be interferences with the covenanted sacrifice. "F," pages 488-489.

The worthiness of the espoused virgin Church to be the bride, the Lamb's wife, consists not merely in sinlessness, though she will be holy and "without blemish"—"without spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27), made "whiter than snow" in the great fountain of redeeming love, her Redeemer's merit. This much is necessary to all who will ever be accounted worthy of lasting life on any plane. But to be the bride of the Lamb, she must not only be a virgin in purity, and in addition be free from sinful alliance and coquetry with the world, but she must be more, much more than this. She must so closely resemble her Lord, and so closely follow his footsteps and his counsel, that she will on this account be a sufferer, a martyr, as he was, and for the sake of the same principles of truth and righteousness. She must prove that she possesses a consuming love for the Bridegroom, and an untiring devotion to his name and principles, so as to be willing to be despised and rejected of the worldly, as he was, for the sake of obedience to his doctrines. "C," pages 209-210.

◆

Besetments will come against us to turn us from the perfect love toward the Father, to induce us to consent to render less than the full homage and obedience due to him. Temptations will come to us in respect to the brethren also, to suggest that we do not permit love for the brethren to cover a multitude of faults;—suggestions that we become provoked with those whom we have learned to love and appreciate and with whose weaknesses we have learned to sympathize. Besetments will come against us in respect to our enemies, after we have learned to love them,—suggesting to us that there are exceptional cases and that our magnanimity toward them should have its limitations. Blessed are we if in these temptations we hold fast, bearing down upon the mark. "F," 190.

◆

It seems strange that any who had run well so far along the course should fall when so near the fruition of their hope; yet, when warned of such a possibility, it behooves all the consecrated to watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation; for in these last days come the perilous times foretold by by the Apostle. (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1; 4:3-5.) And yet the times are not so perilous that divine grace is unable to sustain those who lean confidently upon the Omnipotent Arm. Indeed, those who humbly keep the narrow way of sacrifice were never before so well sustained, or so fully equipped with the whole armor of God. "C," page 200.

◆

The Apostle's words to the Church are to be kept in memory,—that we all must be "changed," and made spirit beings LIKE our Lord, BEFORE we can "see him as he is." (1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 John 3:2.) "D," page 600.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER THIRTY

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Questions For Self-Examination

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."—Phil. 4: 8.

THE APOSTLE, in our text, points out the proper course for us to take in getting control of ourselves, our thoughts, our words and our conduct. Every thought should be challenged; for if an evil thought or a selfish thought or a mean thought, a depraved thought, be admitted, it will germinate and bring forth a great defilement, which will affect our words and our conduct, and will extend to others. We may learn to do the challenging readily, even along the comprehensive lines which the Apostle lays down in this lesson. What at first may require considerable time for decision will by and by be decided almost instantly:

(1) Is the thought which is seeking consideration in our mind an honorable one? If so, it may pass in and be entertained. If not, it should be immediately resented and driven out from the mind as an evil influence.

(2) Is the thought suggested a pure one—not sensual, not selfish? If so, if it pass these examinations, it may pass on for further consideration. If by these it fails to prove its purity, it should be immediately resented as a thought likely to do great harm—as would the entrance into our home of things infected with a plague.

(3) Is the thought lovely? Does it appertain to things that are lovable? Does it excite lovable influences, or is it identified more or less with hate, resentment, anger, malice? If lovely, it may pass on. If not, it must be immediately expelled, not permitted to go further, to do harm to ourselves and to others.

(4) Is it reputable? This cannot mean: Is the thing well spoken of by the world? for the Apostle himself and our Lord Jesus were reviled by the world, who said all manner of evil against them falsely. The word reputable here must be taken to mean that which would be thought well of by all reputable people, if they knew and understood everything connected with the thought.

(5) Has the thought any virtue, or is it in any sense of the word praiseworthy? If so, it may be admitted. If not, it should be repelled; for even if it be blameless otherwise, the fact that it is not of any value is a reason for its rejection. We have no time and no place for things that are merely not bad. We desire to have in our hearts and our minds things that are positively good, helpful, beneficial in some way. Otherwise, the thought should be repelled as a mere cumberer of the ground of our hearts, of our minds, needed for profitable things. Z. '16: 169.

It is a principle of the Divine Government that "He that exalteth Himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."—Luke 14: 11; 1 Peter 5: 6. Every creature of God, whether angel or man, should have this humble mind. This is the only proper attitude. Z. '16: 37.

◆

The prayer of God's people should not be for temporal things. We know of no scriptural illustration where the spiritual sons of God asked definitely for temporal things and received an answer. Z. '15: 40.

◆

St. Peter reminds us, "What manner of persons ought we to be," in all holiness of life, in separateness from the world! The Apostle puts this solemn question right home to us. It is applicable now as never before. Let us lay these precious words to heart; for we stand in the very presence of the Great Judge of all the earth. Z. '16: 72.

◆

The class that God is now seeking have the qualities of an overcomer. They have a strong individuality; they have a will. They are not supine; they are not merely placid. Z. '15: 73.

◆

What great thing must God work in us and for us, eventually if present foretastes of his goodness and grace are so superlatively grand? Z. '03: 89.

We should be critical of our own motives, of the principles underlying our own conduct. We should reason, "I am about to do so and so. Is this course right?" We should judge our actions in advance. We should not go blundering along, failing to take ourselves in hand, and then say, after the thing is done, "Well, I intend to make amends." Of course we should make amends if we have done wrong. But we should get into the habit of so controlling our mind that it would preclude our doing what we should not do. Z. '15: 73.

◆

According to the standard of God's Word, the disciples of Christ should be the most polished, the most courteous, the most refined, the most generous, the most kind and considerate, of all people. Theirs should not be merely an outward appearance of these graces, so common to the world, but should be a kindness, a gentleness, which springs from the heart, because of the possession of the Lord's Spirit, the spirit of justice, of mercy and of love. Z. '15: 73.

◆

Those whom the Lord instructs, and who will receive his instruction, will not be like the horse or mule that must be turned and guided by force. Their hearts will be so in sympathy with the Lord that he can deal with them otherwise, to their blessing and joy. Z. '03: 397.

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OLD CORN GEMS

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"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18: 51.

LOVE OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON, OUR PATTERN

Discourse Delivered by Brother Russell at the 1915 Convention at Oakland, California

OF THE Master we are assured that at the conclusion of His earthly ministry He still dearly loved His disciples. We read, "Jesus, . . . having loved His own, He loved them unto the end." We are to draw a strict line of demarcation between the love of God which the Bible points out as applicable to all mankind, and the love of God which is conferred upon the Church. In the large, broad sense of the word, the Bible assures us that "God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life." However, there was nothing in the fallen man that God could really **love,** in the sense of fellowshiping him. Really, there was nothing in man to draw out the love of God toward him—everything rather to the contrary. And this was the reason God sentenced man at the first, immediately after his fall, declaring Father Adam not worthy of His continued love and favor, and condemned him to death.—Genesis 3:17-19.

We are not to understand that God changed His mind meantime and concluded that, after all, He did love Adam and wished that He had not condemned him to death. Rather, we are to understand that the love of God which He exercised toward the world is of the sympathetic kind. You and I might have a kind of sympathetic love for a poor dog. If he had injured his paw, we would like to bind up that paw. We would have the sympathetic love. Not that we really loved that dog, but we had sympathy for it. So God's attitude toward the world is an attitude of sympathy. And He would have His people have a kind, generous feeling toward all men, and even toward the brute creation. In harmony with this the Apostle tells us that we are to do good to all men as we have opportunity, but especially unto them who are of the Household of Faith.—Galatians 6:10.

The Lord makes a definite rule. We are not to class the Household of Faith in with the world. We are not to think of giving the world the same affection or love or interest that we give to the Household of Faith. Neither does God.

The love which God has for the world is entirely different from that which the Savior mentions when He says, "The Father Himself loveth you." This seems to me one of the most wonderful texts of the Bible—that our great God could have a love for us —so small, so unworthy of His love or attention! This same sentiment of the Heavenly Father is reflected in the words of our text, "Jesus having loved His own, . . . He loved them unto the end." No doubt was there. We cannot think that those who were especially His own then, those who had come to Him and become His followers, were the most talented people in Jewry, any more than are His disciples today. Were they especially His own because they were so well educated? Was it because they were so refined? No. Was it because the world appreciated them and would take charge of them, or because they could be raised to responsible positions in the eyes of the world? No.

Why Jesus Loves His Own

Why did Jesus have this special love for them? —"having loved His **own,** He loved them unto the **end."** There is something important here. You and I wish to know whether the Savior loves us. His is not merely a random love. There is a principle involved. He loved them because they were **His own,** but not in the selfish sense that a man would love his house and his dog and his cat, because he possessed them, because he owned them. Not in that sense did Jesus call His disciples His own. His was an unselfish love. He purposed to do something for them.

What was the reason that Jesus loved and called His disciples His own? I think you are agreed with me as to the reason. He loved them because they had those qualities of heart that would make them lovable from His standpoint. I think that those qualities are ones that you may have and I may have. You and I in thinking along this line, may **see** and **know.** I am glad the Bible says that Jesus **loved His own.** I am glad I am one of His own and therefore can believe that Jesus loves **me,** not in the merely sympathetic sense that He loves the unbelieving world, but in the speical sense made manifest in our text.

The quality that made Jesus love them was, I believe, first of all, their honesty. It seems to me there is no quality more estimable in the sight of God than honesty. Should not everybody be honest? I answer, Yes. **Is** everybody honest? Evidently not. The honesty which these disciples manifested was that they were ready to confess that they were nothing of themselves. They could not keep the Law of God. They could not think of themselves as anybody. They knew, as all Jews knew, or ought to have known, that God had given them the Law as the standard. They could not keep that Law. They were honest enough to confess it. Their hearts were therefore in the attitude to look for something that God had to give that would be better than the Law Covenant:—Romans 7; 8:1-4.

Hypocrisy the Great Sin

Notice the great ones, the holy, the religious ones, of the Jewish nation—the Scribes and Pharisees and Priests. They were claiming that they kept the Law; but they were not keeping the Law, as Jesus pointed out. That meant that they were deceived. They were professing to keep the Law. They made broad their phylacteries. They made long prayers to be seen of men. Jesus was continually reproving them. Doubtless there were many murderers, thieves and vagabonds in Palestine; yet we notice that Jesus passed all their criminality by as insignificant as compared with hypocrisy. The most serious denunciations the Master gave were toward this class. The further you and I can get away from being religious hypocrites the better. If the whole religious community professing Christ could get away from hypocrisy, it would make a great stir in the world. There is a great deal made of certain names, indicating certain religious activities by means of these names, but the names do not match the facts in the case.

The disciples were honest, confessing themselves nobodies and confessing that they were not able to do right, not able to keep God's Law; and because they thus accepted God's Message, speaking peace with God and telling them that they might have forgiveness of sins through Him—because they had this attitude of mind, Jesus received them as His disciples. They were glad to believe the Message He had to give—that He was selecting the Kingdom Class, to be highly exalted to bless mankind. They left all to follow Him. He had taken a similar course. He had forsaken all to do the Father's will. He had given up the glorious condition which He had with the Father before the world was. As a human being He had consecrated Himself at the time of His baptism, gladly, willingly, that He might do the will of the Father. Here were some, these dear disciples of His, having noted His purity and having received His Message, who were glad to walk in His steps, that they likewise might do the will of the Father. Jesus declared that each of these was His mother, His sister, His brother. There was the secret of it.

None So Precious as the Lord's Own

Our Lord had received these disciples as being very closely related to Himself. They were the most precious ones in all the world. They were not His natural brothers and natural sisters; but because they had the Spirit of the Father, because they had His own Spirit, they were greatly beloved. Having loved His own, He continued to love them to the end.

At the conclusion of His earthly career, you remember, at the time He was thinking about them, and thinking about leaving them, He prayed to the Father about them. He said, "I pray not for the world." He was about to die for the world; but He did not pray for the world, because the salvation of the world was not yet due, in God's Plan. He prayed for those that had willingly given themselves to be His disciples and to walk in His steps. He prayed that they all might be one—not that they might all be one person; they would always be different persons, but that they might all have one spirit, one mind, one heart, one disposition, that they might all be true disciples, that they might be one with the Father.

This was his prayer for them. He said that His followers should love one another **as He had loved them.** This is bringing it down to you and to me. It is one thing to realize the love of the Lord Jesus for us, and it is another to realize that the **Father Himself** loveth us because we have left the world and turned our backs upon sin. You may never be able to conquer all these weaknesses of yours fully, to your dying day. The Lord judges the heart, the will. He knows whether you have turned your back upon sin. **He knows whether you have given up your heart entirely to do His will,** to walk humbly in the footsteps of Jesus.

"The Father Himself loveth you"! What would you take, my dear brother, for what that text teaches of the Love of God toward us as His children? He has a love for the world. As a God, a Creator, He has the supervision of all His creatures. God has made provision for every creature, even the sparrow. But for all who have come into this loyal attitude of mind, He has love—sympathy, and more, **esteem!**

"Keep Yourselves in the Love of God"

If we know that we came into the love of God, then let us remember, as the Apostle John says, that we are to **keep** ourselves in the love of God. You say, "Are we able to keep ourselves? Did not St. John make a mistake?" No, my dear brother, he made no mistake. We must keep ourselves in the love of God. "We are not able to keep ourselves, are we?" Yes, the keeping is with you. God will never force your will. God is not now seeking those who need to be compelled. By and by, in the next Age, in the Millennium, He will deal with those who need to be forced and compelled. He will deal with these that they may compare the good and its results with the evil and its results. Now the Father seeks such as worship Him in spirit, drawing near to Him, loving Him.

It is not that we first loved Him, but that He first loved us—the love we see reflected in His great Plan for the uplifting of our race. All this tells us of the great God that we have. When we came into His family by surrendering our wills to Him, and He begat us of His Holy Spirit, we came into a precious relationship. There is nothing like it in the Universe. The holy angels indeed are in God's love and favor; they never were out of it. But we who were once sinners, and who are now received back into His family, are begotten of His Spirit to the highest of all natures. How wonderful, my dear brother! I think, and so do you, that God loves us very, very much, or He would never have made such wonderful provision in the riches of His grace and in His loving kindness towards us who are in Christ Jesus. The provisions of God's grace are not only those of the future, and it is not that He will ultimately change and transform us who are now willing to will and to do His good pleasure, but we are actually being transformed today, by this love of the Father.

I believe that daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, as we think upon these things, as we consider, study out and understand the great love of God as expressed in His marvelous Plan, we are getting a wonderful realization of how much "the Father Himself loveth" us. But we cannot understand it fully. But the very fact that any Father would do such wonderful things for any child would imply a great deal of love.

God had love for the angels when He made them. He had love for the cherubim and the seraphim when He made them. They always will be grand characters and therefore worthy of God's love. But here is the most wonderful expression of God's love that we by faith can believe in—that God should have such love towards us who are in every way disorganized as a race. The Father looked down and beheld in this race some jewels; and He lifted these jewels up and washed them free from sin through the merit of the Savior; and then, through their consecration, began the work of polishing these jewels and getting them ready for the mounting in effulgent glory in the Resurrection Morning, when He shall set these jewels in the gold of the Divine nature. Surely the Father Himself loveth us!

"What Shall I Render Unto the Lord?"

As the Father loves us, and as we have also the word of assurance that the Savior loves us, what now shall we do in return? What shall I render unto the Lord my God for all His benefits toward me? This is as little as we can say. If you were taken in hand by some very rich and influential person, when you were a mere waif upon the world, and if he took you into his own home and adopted you into his own family, you would say, "What a benefactor this is!" If you had a grateful heart, you would say, "All my time and influence shall go to this benefactor, to show him how much I appreciate his kindness toward me." As surely as you had a proper heart you would feel that way.

Now, then, what shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits—His love, His kindness, for the great redemption in which we share with the world, and further for the High Calling which we have received to come out of the world and become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Ours is a Heavenly inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away—an inheritance reserved for us who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time. All this is ours. God has fixed it so. There is no mistaking the matter. This is a New Creation. Until this Gospel Age there has been no sharing of His level, so to speak; but we cannot lose our way while we follow our Guide. And in proportion as you and I appreciate what God has done for us, we surely wish to do something for Him.

What can we do? You look at yourself, and I look at myself; and we say truly and honestly, "We are mere bundles of imperfection. We have nothing worthy to offer to the Lord our God." But you did offer and it was accepted. You have given all you had and the Lord has received you; otherwise you would not belong to this class at all. The Father thus loves only those who have made this consecration. They are the only ones that are in the Church whose names are written in Heaven. You had your will to give. You gave your little all. The Father accepted you and begat you of His Spirit; and that is the reason why you are of God's Elect, and that is the reason why you can realize more fully, "The Father Himself loveth you."

What shall we render? The things that you are to render and I am to render are the things we consecrated to God—the very same. That was your little all and my little all. But how shall we render our all? In everything, especially in our wills, we should seek to know the Father's will. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God. In other words, my dear brethren, in coming into God's family and making this Covenant with the Lord, we have bound ourselves down. **He** did not bind us. We bound **ourselves** down, that we would have no will of our own in any matter, that we would do only His will.

Bond Slaves of Christ, Yet Free Men

We cannot have what we please to wear. We are not even to eat what we please. We are not even to go where we please. We are not even permitted to think what we please. "Well," says one, "I never heard the like of such a bondage!" That is true, my dear Brother. We are bond slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ. "And shall we never get rid of this slavery?" You can stop it any minute. All who are slaves of the Lord Jesus are **voluntary** slaves. You came in voluntarily; and you can just as quickly renounce it all if you please. Do you wish to do so? Oh, no! It is the most blessed bondage you were ever in! Every time you have found you had to give up your own will you found you had a greater blessing in return, more than compensating. You found all things working together for good, because you were renouncing your own will and walking in the footsteps of Jesus. Precious bondage! You found how many mistakes you made when you tried to do your own will—about your clothing, your food, and everything else. You are glad to have some general direction from One who is so wise. Because of this direction, the Apostle says of this class that they have "the spirit of a sound mind."—2 Timothy 1:7.

Our minds are all imperfect and unsound. When we are guided not by our own wills but by the Lord's will, as expressed to us in His Word, then we come to have the spirit of a sound mind. And much, much blessing has it brought us! I am sure I speak the sentiments of every one here present who is a consecrated child of God.

Gradually we come to love the Lord's way. We grow in grace and in knowledge and in the love of God, so that eventually we come to hate the things we once loved and to love the things we once despised. Thus as the Apostle describes it, We are transformed by the renewing of our minds.—Romans 12:2.

This bondage is freedom in a very important respect. (1 Corinthians 7:22.) We are getting a victory over the bondage of sin; we are more victorious daily over the bondage of the weaknesses of our flesh. But this bondage to the will of the Lord is bringing us daily blessings; and ultimately it will bring us the First, the Chief Resurrection, of which Jesus says, "Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the First Resurrection; . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Revelation 20:6.) All this will come to you and me, if we are faithful in doing the Lord's will to the extent of our ability. God never expects anybody to do beyond his ability. We are to have the glorious standard of the Lord before us, and to live as fully up to that standard as we are able. The Lord Jesus could not do more than all He was able. Being perfect He was able to do perfectly. Being imperfect we cannot do perfectly; and therefore the blood of Jesus cleanseth us, makes us clean, while we seek to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

How We May Minister to the Lord

Here we come to another point. The Lord knew that you and I could not do anything for Him. He gave us a suggestion how we might indirectly do for Him. You know to what I refer. He says that we should love one another, and that in loving one another we would be expressing the love which we have for Him. So the Apostle John in speaking of this same matter, from this same standpoint, says that as Christ laid down His life for us, so we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. He does not say that we should lay down our lives for everybody—for the heathen or for the world in general. No, no. We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. That is the way it reads. The Lord knew how to have it written. We are to lay down our lives for the ones whom Jesus loved.

I have found some very dear children of God who seemingly found it much easier to do something for the world than for the Church. That is not the proper sentiment. It is God First, the Lord Jesus next, the brethren next; and after that, all men as we have opportunity; and after that, the brute creation as we have opportunity. Brutes are to be neglected in favor of men, and the world are to be neglected in favor of the Church. If we have His Spirit we will love His own. . . .

"He That Loveth God, Loveth His Brother Also"

"Brother Russell, if you love all the brethren, you are going to love some pretty rude characters, you are going to love some very ignorant ones, you are going to love some that are not well esteemed amongst men." I cannot help it. I am going to love all who love God. You remember that the Twelve Apostles, except St. Paul, were all very ordinary men. You remember that when St. Peter and St. John, two of the very brightest of the Twelve, were preaching in the Temple the people perceived they were unlearned and ignorant men. Think of that! The "common people" could see it. Are these the ones Jesus loved? Yes. I suppose they cracked and broke the classic Hebrew at times. This does not mean that we should love more than others those who break the English language into pieces, but we should not allow ignorance to stand between any brother or sister and our love. ..We should see to it that we love all who are in fellowship with our Lord.

This is the reason they are commended to our love—because they have His spirit, regardless of whether they are from the highest or the lowest ranks of society. If the Father Himself has accepted them into His family, and the Father loves them, that is reason enough for you and me that we should love them. We ought to love the brethren. How much? It is a very long step the Apostle sets before us—we ought to be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. Our commission is not to preach to the world, but merely to such as have "an ear to hear" and a desire to find God." . . . . Merely to have a harangue to interest the world is no part of our mission whatever. . . .

Suppose some of those who profess to be consecrated to God are very, very weak indeed every way? Very well, my dear brother, perhaps the Lord sees you are weak and that you get into trouble too. Do you not know that He has many things to overlook in you? We are to be of as little trouble to others as possible, but we are to bear with the infirmities of the weak brethren and not merely to please ourselves. Let me repeat. We are to bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, and not to please ourselves. How much that means! I trust we are learning this. I am merely pointing out what you all know, that the love of God is the fulfilling of the Divine requirement, and that this love is to manifest itself toward those whom He acknowledges as His children and receives into His family. If I see that any man has God's fellowship, I dare not deny my fellowship.

We Must Fellowship Whom God Fellowships

I think of a story told about a New York banker, that might illustrate the point. He was an upright man. This banker had a friend living at a distance, who, wishing to give his son a start in life, gave him a letter of introduction to the banker. He wrote, "If you can introduce my son into the business world, it will be quite a favor to me." This wealthy man of Wall Street had very great confidence in his friend; and he perceived, when he looked at the young man, that he was a noble character. Then he thought about what he could do to get him established in business. Without comment, he said, "Come, let us take a little walk"; and they walked arm in arm down Wall street and Bond street and New street and back again to the office. The young man waited a while in nervous expectancy. Then, noticing that the banker was apparently not expecting to do anything more, he said, "Is there anything you can do to introduce me?" And the banker replied, "It is not necessary. The fact that I had you on my arm and led you down these streets will be a sufficient introduction to the business men of this vicinity." And the young man found it so.

So when God takes hold of a man, and we see him in God's company, we know God is willing to introduce him, and it gives him a standing with you and me. He is one of the brethren, because "the Father Himself loveth" him; the Father Himself recognizes him as one of His family. Then you and I should be willing to do anything for him that we are able. It is the Father's will that we should co-operate with Him in assisting the brethren in every way possible. There are various trials and difficulties for these brethren that you and I know about. All the soldiers of the cross have a narrow way, a battle with the world and with the flesh and with the Adversary. You and I have battles due to the fallen condition of our own flesh. What sympathy it should give us with all other soldiers in the battle! There are the two Captains. All who are on the Lord's side or who are seeking to walk in the footsteps of Jesus belong to our army. Whether learned or ignorant, black or white, rich or poor, it is our privilege to love our brethren.

Hast Thou Love?. Then Show It Now

I believe this is as good a thought as we can have as we close this Convention. The Master said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the Age." (Matthew 28:20.) We are now down at the end of the Age, "Only waiting till the dawning is a little brighter grown," only waiting till we pass beyond the veil, till we are joined to the Savior on the other side the veil. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." **No opportunity after that of helping the brethren!** All the brethren will have been helped. They will all have passed then where they will need no help. The time when we can encourage one another, and give a helpful look, or a warm clasp of the hand, and can show our fellowship in the sufferings of the present time, is **now.**

I hope we are all learning more and more this lesson of love; and I hope our hearts are opening more and more widely, as we come to see the glorious character of our Father and of our Savior, and come to receive of the Master's image, reflected in us more and more. The Apostle says that by looking on Jesus we are changed, we are transformed from glory to glory, in the present life. As we thus go on from one stage of heart development to another, from one step of glory to another, on this side of the veil, we are making the necessary progress, and we will be ready for the great final step, the final stage, when we shall see Him as He is and share His glory.

My dear brethren, do we not believe that all these things are nigh, **even at the door?** The Master said, "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads and rejoice; for your deliverance draweth nigh." Are we rejoicing properly? . . .

Parting Words

As we leave here today, we do so with the thought that we **may** meet again as a Convention or perhaps we may **not** meet again. It is not for you or for me to be dictatorial. The Bible indicates that the Gentile Times **have ended.** Their kings have had their day. They have made a good showing, in many respects. Many of these governments have done wonderfully. . . . Much might be said in favor of all these Gentile governments, as well as against them all. Yet when they have done their best, they have done little. Have the nations been able to lift up mankind to full perfection? No. Have the doctors been able to lift up mankind? No. Would the United States ever be able to do so? No. On the contrary, with all the increasing intelligence, we see the cataclysm of dissolution and anarchy coming. But all the trouble will be as nothing in comparison with the blessings that shall come when the Sun of Righteousness is revealed. But the portal of trouble must first be passed. And it will be a very helpful experience to all the world, as they shall be brought down to the place where they will look to the Lord as their Helper. Man's extremity will become God's opportunity.

Then, my brethren, let us be faithful to the light God has given us. Let us live the Truth every day, "showing forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light." I hear of many who have received a blessing from the daily reading of the Vow; others through reading the Morning Resolve. **I believe we cannot too fully surround ourselves with helpful influences.** We need to fortify. We need to get ourselves strengthened by the Divine might in the inner man, that we may be able to resist those things that are contrary to us as New Creatures. Let us then suggest the keeping of these resolves, and thus living near to God. Z. '15:211-215.

The Apostle Paul exhorts the saints that they "pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance." These words do not signify that we should be always upon our knees or continually uttering a prayer. But we should never cease to pray, and our prayers should be **in the spirit**—earnest, sincere. The children of God are not to "say prayers," they are to **pray.** There is much formal prayer—much saying of prayers—which do not get higher than the head of the one who repeats the words. The Scriptures speak of this as drawing near to God with the lips when the heart is far from Him. **It would be better that we should not approach the Lord at all than that we should do so in an improper manner.** Z. '16:22.

"Consider Him"---Then Follow

"Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."—Heb. 12:3.

THE APOSTLE had just been pointing out the faithfulness of our Lord Jesus. He had reminded the Church of the shame and ignominy which the Master had endured for the great joy set before Him by the Heavenly Father. He declares Jesus to be the Author and Finisher of our faith. He then urges that in our trials and difficulties as children of God we remember what extreme experiences in suffering the Master endured —such contradiction, such opposition, of sinners against Himself—opposition to His doctrines, to everything that He did. This opposition to Jesus continued until finally it resulted in His murder.

The Apostle says to the Church, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin," as Jesus did. As a matter of fact, we really suffer very little and give up very little. At most we have but little life, as members of the fallen race, and it stretches out for only a brief span. We have very little to consecrate to God. And when that little is going we should consider how insignificant it is, and what great things the Master had—not merely the perfections that He had in His earthly life, but also what He had previously, and how, in obedience to the Divine will, He humbled Himself and left His glory to become a man—and then humbled Himself still further, unto **Death,** "even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted (raised to the highest position—**Strong)** Him, and given Him a name which is above every name."

We should be glad to walk in His footsteps, to endure the same experiences, to drink whatever the Father shall pour out for us in our cup—**His cup.** As we consider thus our dear Master's experiences and faithfulness, it makes our experiences seem only light afflictions, but for a moment, and working out "for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:17, 18.) For let us remember that we are called . . . to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Therefore, brethren, STAND FAST." —2 Thes. 2:14, 15. Z. '15:142-143.**

By Thy Words Acquitted; By Thy Words Condemned

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle [unprofitable or pernicious] word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof on a day of judgment. For by thy words thou wilt be acquitted, and by thy words thou wilt be condemned." —Matt. 12:34-37.

REALIZING that we, the Church, are at the present time under the inspection of our kingly Bridegroom, who is now present (Matt. 22:11) to gather out of his Kingdom [in its present embryo or formative condition] all things that offend" (Matt. 13:41), and to gather unto him-
1 self his jewels, his bride (Mal. 3:17), we cannot too carefully consider the principles upon which this judgment and this selection are made.

The above words of our Lord indicate that the heart and the mouth are under very special scrutiny, the former representing the individual character, and the latter being an index of the character. It is
2 in this same view of the matter that those words of wisdom were penned,—"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee." (Prov. 4:23, 24.) The indication is clear that a right condition of heart is necessary to right words; for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," as experience testifies to every man. It is therefore just that our words should be a criterion of judgment in the Lord's estimation, as he tells us they are. True, honied words are sometimes only the masks of deep hypocrisy; **but the mask is sure to drop off some time, as soon as selfish policy renders a change of tactics necessary.** The fact therefore remains that the words, the entire course of conversation and conduct, are an index of the heart.

Our first concern, then, should be for the heart —that its affections and dispositions may be fully under the control of divine grace; that every principle of truth and righteousness may be enthroned there; that justice, mercy, benevolence, brotherly kindness, love, faith, meekness, temperance, supreme reverence for God and Christ, and a fervent love for all the beauties of holiness, may be firmly fixed as
the governing principles of life. If these principles 3
be fixed, established, in the heart, then out of the good treasure of the heart the mouth will speak forth words of truth, soberness, wisdom and grace.

Concerning our Lord Jesus, whose heart was perfect—in whom was no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, it was said, "Grace is poured into thy lips;" and again, "All bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth." (Psa. 45:2; Luke 4:22.) Moses, personating Christ, foretold the blessed influences of the Lord's words, saying, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew, as
the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the 4
showers upon the grass." (Deut. 32:2.) And Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." (John 6:63.) So wise, just and true were the Lord's words, that, though his enemies were continually seeking to find some fault, it is said, "They could not take hold of his words before the people; and they marveled at his answers and held their peace." (Luke 20:26.) And others said, "Never man spake like this man."—John 7:46.

Thus our Lord left a worthy example to his people, which the Apostle urges all to follow, say-
ing, "Let your speech be always with grace [with 5
manifest love and kindness], seasoned with salt [a

purifying and preservative influence]." (Col. 4:6.) And Peter adds, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."—wisely, and in accordance with the spirit and Word of the Lord. Again, it is written, "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile [deceit]." "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles." "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious words: but the lips of a fool [an unwise, reckless talker] will swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is mischievous madness." "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."—Psa. 34:13; Prov. 21:23; Eccl. 10:12, 13; 5:2.

Job, in the midst of all his afflictions, was very careful not to sin with his lips. (Job 2:10; 31:30; 1:21, 22.) He knew that his words would be taken by the Lord as an index of his heart, and he was careful to keep both the heart and the words right, saying, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil [calamities, troubles—for discipline or refining]? . . . The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." There was no spirit of rebellion in a heart out of whose abundance came such words of loving submission, patience and faith under severe testings, and that, too, without a clear apprehension of the divine wisdom in permitting them.

The Psalmist puts into the mouth of God's consecrated and tried people these words of firm resolution:—"I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked [who tempts and tries the righteous] is before me."—Psa. 39:1.

How necessary to the stability of Christian character is such a resolution, and the self control which develops under a firm adherence to it. In an unfriendly world we can expect to receive only the reproaches of our Master: for the servant is not above his Lord. The world, the flesh and the devil oppose our way: there are fightings within and fears without, and many are the arrows and fiery darts aimed at the righteous. **But what is the safe attitude of the soul under afflictions and severe testings? Is it not in silence before God, waiting and watching first to see his leading, his will, in every matter before presuming to touch things that often involve so much?** So the Psalmist suggests, saying, "I was dumb with silence: I held my peace, even from good [even from doing or saying what seemed good in my own sight]; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me, and in my self-communing there burnt a fire [description of a fiery trial]. Then spake I with my tongue"—not to the revilers, nor to others, but to the Lord.

Yes, it is always our blessed privilege to carry our sorrows and vexations to the Lord;

"For he knows
How to steal the bitter from life's woes."

He does it, as the Psalmist suggests (vs. 4-6), by showing us, through experience, the vanity of all earthly things and their utter inability to satisfy the soul's cravings, or to comfort the wounded spirit. Then comes the thought that the present life, with its cares, vexations and sorrows is passing away, that our days are but as a handbreadth, and however vexing our experiences, they will soon be over; and if we permit them to do so they will only work out in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and develop in us strong and noble characters, disciplined to thorough self-control, thoughtful consideration, patient endurance of affliction and loving loyalty and faithfulness and trust in God. Then the assurances of the blessed rewards of righteousness in the life to come begin to have a new and deeper significance, and we are made to realize that this is not our continuing city, but we seek one to come. Thus the heart is separated from earthly things, and made to realize the superior worth of heavenly things. Nothing but the Lord himself can satisfy the longings of the soul, which, tempest-tossed and tried, comes to realize—

"How vain is all beneath the skies,
How transient every earthly bliss,
How slender all the fondest ties,
That bind me to a world like this!"

Thus chastened and comforted, we learn to look beyond the present to the glory that shall by and by be revealed in the faithful overcomers, who, by patient continuance in well-doing in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, seek for the prize revealed to faith alone. Thus disciplined and blessed under fiery trials by going to the Lord for comfort and help, the child of God begins to realize what it means to be dead to the world and alive toward God, with a keen appreciation of his love and goodness and grace; and being thus separated from the world, and more firmly united to Christ, the language of the heart is, as the Psalmist further suggests, "And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee." (Vs. 7.) Thus

"E'en sorrow, touched by heaven, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

Such is the blessed result of bridling the tongue under circumstances of trial and vexation, and humbly taking all our cares to the Lord in prayer, to the end that, when we speak, our speech may be with grace, seasoned with salt, and that under all circumstances we may speak as the oracles of God.

Considering our Lord's words above quoted—that we much give an account for "every idle [unprofitable or pernicious] word"—in view of the fact that the present is our (the Church's) judgment day, we see what great importance attaches to our words. **All our words are taken by the Lord as an index of our hearts.** If our words are rebellious, or disloyal, or frivolous, or flippant, or unkind, unthankful, unholy or impure, the heart is judged accordingly, on the principle that, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Thus our words, in all the varied circumstances of our daily life, are bearing testimony continually before God of the condition of our hearts. So our Lord's words imply: and in this view of the case how timely is the admonition,—"Be not rash with thy mouth; and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God [And remember that "all things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do."—Heb. 4:13]; for God [our Judge] is in heaven [upon the throne], and thou upon earth [under trial before the bar of God]: therefore let thy words be few." Let them be thoughtful and wise, as uttered before God, and not rash, hasty and ill considered.

Again, in harmony with the Lord's statement of the responsibility incurred by our words, it is also written, "He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction." (Prov. 13:3.) **What a fearful responsibility attaches to the tongue that wags in an evil, or even in a flippant, way,** which is also dishonoring to God! And how necessary is the injunction of the Apostle Peter, "Be sober and watch unto prayer!" —1 Pet. 4:7; 1:13; 5:8.

The Psalmist puts this prayer into the lips of all who feel this responsibility, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep a guard at the door of my lips. Permit not my heart to incline after any evil thing." "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." "My lips shall utter praise when thou hast taught me thy statutes. My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness. Let thy hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts. I have longed for thy salvation [from all sin, and for the perfection and beauty of holiness], O Lord; and thy law is my delight."—Psa. 141:3, 4; 19:14; 119:171-174.

That, as imperfect beings, we may always be perfect in word and deed is not possible. Despite our best endeavors we will sometimes err in word as well as in deed, yet the perfect mastery of our words and ways is the thing to be sought by vigilant and faithful effort. But, nevertheless, for every idle word we must give an account in this our day of judgment. If, in the daily scrutiny of our ways, which is the duty of every Christian, we discover that in any particular our words have been dishonoring to the Lord, we should remember that, "If any man sin; we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1); and in the name of our Advocate we may approach the throne of grace, explain to our Heavenly Father our realization of the error, our deep regret at our failure to honor his name and his cause by a holy walk and conversation, and humbly request that the sin be not laid to our charge, but that it may be blotted out through his gracious provision for our cleansing through Christ, humbly claiming that in his precious blood is all our hope and trust.

Thus we should render up our account for every idle word; and by our words of repentance, supplemented by the merits of Christ applied by faith, shall we be acquitted. Otherwise the idle words, dishonoring to the Lord, will stand against us and condemn us, and we will be obliged to suffer the consequences. The first consequence will be self-injury, for every evil thought or word indulged hardens the character and inclines it the more toward unrighteousness. The second consequence is a bad example to others, and the stirring up of evil in them. "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." (Prov. 15:1.) Thus, as the result of unwise or unkind words, we may stir up about us difficulties which will become the agents of retributive justice to teach us the lesson of self-control, and consideration for the feelings and opinions of others. **It is often the case that the Lord (or the devil) is blamed for sending trials which are simply the natural results of our own mistakes.** And those who fail to locate the root of the trouble **(in themselves)** pray in vain for the Lord to remove miraculously what they themselves could obviate by obedience to the Word, and vigorous self-discipline. "If we would judge [and correct] ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord [largely by the experiences through which our own faults put us], that we should not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. 11:31, 32.) But even should it be admitted that the difficulties are not directly caused by God, or the devil ("Every man is tempted [tried] when he is drawn away of his own lusts [desires] and enticed"), the natural tendency is to blame the matter on some one else, and to think that our loss of patience, our hasty word or act was the fault of another. How many deceive and encourage themselves with the thought: "If every body else had as reasonable and generous a nature as I have, our family or church gathering or community would be a veritable heaven upon earth!" Beloved, let us examine **ourselves,** let us be very humble, lest the very words of self-congratulation and self satisfaction which we consider in our hearts (if we do not utter them aloud) bring our condemnation. "If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye [what merit is there in it]?" (Luke 6:33-38.) It is only when we "endure grief, **suffering wrongfully,**" that our suffering is acceptable to God as a sacrifice of sweet incense. "What glory is it if, **when ye be buffeted for your faults,** ye take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto were ye called." (1 Pet. 2:18-21.) Beloved, let us see to it that our sufferings are for righteousness' sake only, and let us not charge God or our neighbors for tribulations resulting from the indulgence of our inherited or cultivated faults.

"In many things we are all faulty. If any one does not err in word, he is a perfect man, able to control the whole body." (Jas. 3:2.) But such a man does not exist. We all need and must continually plead the merit of our Redeemer and Advocate, while we strive daily to bring every thought into captivity to the will of Christ, and to perfect holiness in the fear (reverence) of the Lord.

In view of this fact, which we trust all of the Lord's people will endeavor more and more fully to realize, viz., that we now stand before the bar of judgment, we inquire, in the words of Peter, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" God-likeness certainly cannot include any harmful gossip, any unclean or unholy conversation, any disloyel or rebellious words. Let such things be put far away from all who name the name of Christ in sincerity and truth. And let us remember daily to settle our accounts with the Lord, to make sure that no record of idle words, unrepented of, and consequently unforgiven, stands against us. "Let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ." "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Thus out of the good treasure of the heart we shall be able to speak the words of truth and soberness, to honor our Lord by a godly walk and conversation, to subdue the evil tendencies of our fallen nature, and to have our conversation "honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."—Phil. 1:27; 4:8; 1 Pet. 2:12.

If daily we render up our accounts to God and seek his grace for greater overcoming power with each succeeding day, we shall be acquitted in judgment and stand approved before God through Christ, having the testimony of his holy spirit with our spirits that we are pleasing and acceptable to him. Z. '96:30-33.

"Think On These Things"

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."—Phil. 4:8.

"KEEP thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life," is one of the wise sayings of the inspired Word (Prov. 4:23); and it was with the same thought in mind that the Apostle penned the above words to the Church at Philippi, whom he addressed with great affection and appreciation as his "joy and crown." (4:1.) The little company of consecrated believers there were the first-fruits of his ministry, and were specially remarkable for their loyalty and faithfulness to the Lord, the truth and the beloved Apostle, who at this time was a prisoner in Rome. Thither, in his time of need, they sent their gifts, and these expressed their love and sympathy and care for his temporal welfare, which they had always been forward to do while he ministered to them in spiritual things. (4:10-19.) In them the Apostle was comforted and cheered, and he rejoiced even in his afflictions in that they also were for their sakes: **for the example of his patience in tribulation and joy and in self-sacrifice was as valuable a lesson to the saints as were any of his most profound and logical instructions.**

Being desirous that these disciples should continue to manifest the fruits of the spirit and to grow in grace, this epistle is one of encouragement and wise counsel—to **stand fast** in the faith and spirit of the gospel and to learn more fully how to deny themselves even as Christ did (1:27, 29; 2:1-11); to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (2:12); to beware of false teachers and evil workers (3:2, 18, 19); and to seek to be all of the same mind—the mind which was in Christ Jesus; to esteem each other in the Lord; and to do nothing even for the cause of Christ through any spirit of strife or vain-glory.

Then follows this beautiful final admonition of our text, so in keeping with the thought that out of the heart are the issues of life. The heart represents the will, the intentions. The will must be kept true and centered in God: it is the governing power of the whole man. **Blessed are the pure in heart—those of fixed, uncompromising purpose.** Yet though the will is the controlling power of the man, it is also subject to influences. If the thoughts be impure, unjust or unholy, the power of the will becomes more and more impaired. Hence the wisdom of the Apostle's advice as to what should be the character of our thoughts. In those who are striving to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord—to adorn themselves with the beauty of holiness—the thoughts must not be neglected and permitted to browse in every pasture, but must be disciplined to feed upon convenient and healthful food, such as the Apostle directs, viz.:—

(1.) "Whatsoever things are **true.**" That would exclude indulgence in visionary and foolish fiction, which does so much to corrupt the mind and squander time. It would also exclude all the idle speculative theories of men who, ignoring the **true** gospel, seek to draw away disciples after them. It would banish also the vain philosophies of the creeds of "Christendom," when once the symmetry and beauty of the divine plan of the ages has been seen. **It would avoid all idle gossip and evil surmisings**; and, having escaped the gloom and discontent and the perplexity, care and worry consequent upon entertaining such thoughts, the mind can be at peaceful leisure for the contemplation of that which is **true.** Then it may draw from the abundant storehouse which our bountiful God has supplied, both in his Word of law and prophecy and precept and promise and in the open book of Nature.

How richly the mind is rewarded that dwells upon these things. The law of God and its application to all the minutiae of life's affairs should be the most constant theme of meditation among the saints, since it is to be applied in all our business and social relations; and its often intricate problems require close discernment and discrimination. "Oh, how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day," is the sentiment which the inspired Psalmist (119:97) would put into the mouth of all the Lord's people. Then the prophecies, so laden with good tidings of great joy for all people, and the promises, so exceeding great and precious, how full of blessing they are to all who delight in their contemplation! And in the light of the glorious gospel nature itself wears a brighter face and speaks a loftier language, emphasizing the love and power and praise of our God. Whatsoever things are **true,** brethren, think on these things.

(2) "Whatsoever things are **honest.**" That would exclude all deceit and hypocrisy, all evil scheming and intrigue, as well as thoughts of deliberate plunder or falsehood or evil speaking, giving place to frank and open honesty of thought, developing daily into good and noble deeds.

(3) "Whatsoever things are **just.**" This would

discard all unjust weights and balances in estimating the character and motives of our fellow-men, and particularly our brethren in Christ. It would make all due allowances for the infirmities of the flesh, remembering that we also are subject to infirmity, if not so much in one direction, then in another. It would consider surroundings, estimate the bias of influences and calculate the force of temptations, in order to find, if possible, extenuating circumstances for favorable judgment. Yet it would not ignore facts, and so blindly encourage evil.

The mind, where justice is enthroned, not only seeks always to judge justly, but it has also a fine appreciation of justice. It delights to trace the lines of justice in God's wonderful plan of human salvation. It so clearly sees the value of justice, which is the very foundation principle of God's throne, that the value of the precious blood of Christ in satisfying the demands of justice and thus reclaiming the forfeited life of the world is keenly appreciated. And so fully is this feature of the divine plan and the grandeur of the principle of justice seen and realized, that no vain philosophy of men, which suggests other schemes of salvation which ignore the just claims of justice, can be tolerated. No other plan but this, which is founded in justice and executed in love, can claim the attention of those whose habit of thought is just and to whom the divine plan has been revealed.

(4) "Whatsoever things are pure." Blessed are the pure in heart and mind. Pure thoughts, devoid of the slime and filth of sin, how they invigorate and energize the soul in every high and noble work! The pure mind demands a pure body and clean clothing, though it may be ever so coarse. It courts the society of only the pure and good and shuns the contamination of all others. It seeks also only that which is pure. The vile insinuation, the rude jest, the unchaste in art, are alike an abomination to the pure mind. The pure mind finds delight in the society of the pure and in the contemplation of the virtues and graces and of the true and beautiful. The blessedness of such a condition of mind and heart is too far above the comprehension of the impure to be to any extent appreciated. Its happifying and ennobling influence is best illustrated by the effects upon the body of thorough cleansing and clean clothing which give new energy and vigor to the physical man.

(5) "Whatsoever things are **lovely**; whatsoever things are of **good report** [worthy of praise]; if there be any virtue, and if there be **any praise**, think on these things." Added to all the solid virtues of **truth, honesty, justice** and **purity**, let all the lovely graces and adornments of meekness, patience, faith, godliness, benevolence, kindness and charity occupy our thoughts. And as we hold these virtues before the mind's eye as a mirror, they gradually become more and more assimilated. Thus, too, the will is strengthened and inspired with fresh energy to fulfil its great work in governing and controlling the whole man.

This the Apostle saw to be the philosophy of the influence of the thoughts upon the will and vice versa. Therefore, he would have us set a watch and a governor upon our thoughts and feed them with wholesome and life-giving food, that thus the thoughts may reinforce the will, and the will may govern and control the thoughts to the end that both the present and the future blessing of the pure in heart may be realized by those who are diligently seeking for them.—Matt. 5:8. Z. '94:291-293.

Deliverance in Answer to Prayer

Acts 12:1-19.

Golden Text:—"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."—Psa. 34: 7.

OUR lesson is supposed to date about twelve years after our Lord's crucifixion. A period of rest and prosperity was now followed by persecution. Herod Agrippa I. had been appointed King of Judea. He was grandson of Herod the Great, the murderer of the babes of Bethlehem. He was nephew of Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist. It was his son, Agrippa II., before whom the famous address was made by St. Paul. (Acts 26:28.) He was not a Jew, but an Edomite, a descendant of Esau. He appears to have been desirous of the good will of the people, even at the cost of principle. He took pains to observe the minutiae of Jewish ceremonials. He hung up in the temple the gold chain which the Emperor Caligula had given him. It is related that at a "Feast of Tabernacles" he caused the entire Book of Deuteronomy to be read in the hearing of the people, and that he "burst into theatrical tears" when the reader came to the words, "Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, who is not thy brother." Thereupon the populace obsequiously cried, "Don't weep, Agrippa, you are our brother."

On the lookout to curry favor with the Jews, especially the influential ones, Agrippa caused the Apostle James to be beheaded, and finding that this brought great pleasure to the Jews, he had the Apostle Peter arrested. The Greek word here rendered apprehend rather implies that his arrest was after searching. Probably all of the apostles were more or less secreted about that time, but, trusting to the sacredness of the Passover season, St. Peter ventured forth and was arrested and imprisoned, Agrippa intending his death directly at the close of the Passover week. Meantime, however, the Lord delivered him, as this lesson shows.

We can well imagine the sadness of the Church at that Passover season, which must have reminded them considerably of the time of our Lord's death and the alarm then amongst his followers. It may not be proven to the satisfaction of all, but to us for some years it has seemed as though each Passover season, each Memorial celebration, was a time of special trial and testing amongst the Lord's followers.

The Church Prayed for Peter

St. Peter is supposed to have been imprisoned in the famous Castle of Antonio, possibly in the very same room in which our Lord was arraigned before Pilate, and the same one to which Paul was subsequently taken when mobbed in Jerusalem. Peter had a guard of four quaternions (four soldiers each), who relieved each other every three hours. Two of the four were chained to Peter's arms, one to each arm, and a third was outside the door and a fourth in the passage leading to the outer iron gate. The power of Divine grace helping in every time of need and giving peace amid alarms, is well illustrated in this case by the fact that under all these circumstances St. Peter was fast asleep when the angel of the Lord came to deliver him. The proprieties of the case are also illustrated by the fact that Peter's friends, the Church, were not asleep, but praying for him. It was not for him to pray for himself deliverance from the power of Agrippa, for he had already consecrated his life unto death, and properly should feel quite ready to lay down his life at this time, if such proved to be the Lord's will in respect to him. For him to have asked for the prolongation of his life would have been to ask amiss and would have manifested a wilfulness incompatible with a full consecration to the Lord's will. But with the Church it is different. They could with all propriety, while expressing to the Lord their confidence in the Divine supervision of the Church's affairs, tell him also of their love for St. Peter and of how much his sacrificing in the service of the Truth had done for them and was doing for them. They could properly enough express the hope that it might be the Lord's will that he should continue with them for their joy and comfort and upbuilding in the "most holy faith." It should not surprise us either that this prayer-meeting on St. Peter's account lasted all through the night and, for aught we know, other meetings of the same kind may have been held besides the one referred to in this lesson, which was at the home of Mary, the mother of Mark, the writer of the Book of Mark and the cousin of Barnabas, presumably the unnamed person of Mark 14:51.

It may be asked, Would it not have been appropriate for the Church to have offered prayer and then to have retired as usual, leaving the results entirely with the Lord? We reply that the examples given us in the Scriptures fully warranted the all-night prayer-meeting and even its continuance for several days. Do we not know of our Lord's remaining all night in the mountain at prayer? Do we not remember his long and repeated prayers in Gethsemane? Do we not remember the Apostle's exhortation to the Church, "Praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks"? Giving this a liberal construction as signifying a prayerful attitude of mind and continued looking to the Lord for his grace and guidance, nevertheless our Lord's parable of the importunate widow and her repeated comings and her reward all teach the same lesson of importunity. Besides, our Lord thus applied the parable, saying, "Shall not God avenge his very elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."—Luke 18:7, 8.

In one sense of the word the fears and sufferings of the Lord's people and their trials and difficulties ascend to the Lord in prayer and call to Divine Justice for vengeance, recompense, punishments, without any word from his people to this effect. Rather their petition should be in line with Stephen's prayer for his enemies, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Nevertheless, as Abel's blood is said to have cried to the Lord for vengeance, so the blood of his saints is said to cry unto him day and night, "How long, O Lord, dost thou not judge and avenge?"—Rev. 6:10.

The Lord certainly does not wish us to understand that he has no oversight, arrangement or plans of his own, nor that the Divine arm may be moved by our prayers in any direction at our pleasure, at any time. On the contrary, the Lord assures that all of his purposes shall be accomplished and that his Word shall not return to him void, "but shall prosper in the thing whereto it was sent." (Isa. 55:11.) Nothing can alter the definite, fixed outlines of the Divine program. But the Lord has evidently left certain of the filling in of our experiences subject to change or modification. These minor details he is ready to use for the blessing of his people, for the development of their faith. Thus in St. Peter's case the Lord was doubtless intending a deliverance in some manner, because he had a further work for him to do, but he allowed it to come about in such a manner as to indicate it as a reward of the faith of those who prayed for him. Otherwise the deliverance might have come sooner or later, and in response to faith or works along some other line.

The Lord evidently desires to cultivate in us a quality of faith, trust. Therefore he has made faith a condition for all of his blessings of the present age, and distinctly tells us that without faith it is impossible to please him, and that he desires us to "walk by faith and not by sight."—2 Cor. 5:7.

Why One Taken and the Other Left

The question materially and properly arises, Why was Herod permitted to kill the Apostle James and not permitted to kill the Apostle Peter? Was St. James unworthy of any further part in the Gospel work, or less worthy than the Apostle Peter? Was there not enough work for all, or was St. James permitted to die because he was ready for death, because he had finished his course? And was St. Peter preserved alive because he had not finished his course? None of these suggestions seems to be the correct one. Rather let us surmise that both apostles were loyal and acceptable to the Lord and at the mark of perfect Love, fit for the Kingdom. Let us suppose that the Lord perserved Peter because he had a special work for him to do, and that he allowed the beheading of St. James, not because there was nothing more that he could do, but because by such a death as he experienced and at such a time he could accomplish the most that was possible—a work which could not have been so well done at another time, nor by the death of another person. St. James, apparently, was the leader amongst the apostles and his execution would be a great shock to the cause, awakening the followers of our Lord to renewed zeal and energy in the proclamation of the Truth. It doubtless served to increase the appreciation of the people for the apostles, causing them to give still more earnest heed to their teachings and to realize how greatly the cause of the Lord had been made dependent upon them, the "twelve apostles" of the Church.—Rev. 21:14.

This, then, would help to explain why the Church prayed day and night for St. Peter. The loss of St. James made St. Peter and every other Apostle doubly precious in the estimation of the "household of faith." God intended that St. Peter should live to be an old man, for this was our Lord's prophecy respecting him. But the emergency proved a blessing to the Church, by way of stirring up their pure minds to an appreciation of the Lord's cause in general and for St. Peter in particular. A similar lesson may be drawn today. As we see some ripe grains taken and other ripe grains left, it may mean that the Lord can use the death of the one the better and the life of the other the better, in his dealings with the Church.

A Real Angel, a Real Deliverer

The time in which the holy angels were permitted to materialize still continued a power possessed by them, but, we believe, is not now permitted to be exercised. It was between three and six o'clock in the last watch, for Peter was not missed until sunrise (Vat.), when the guards were changed. St. Peter, sleeping peacefully, was awakened by the angel, whose features were radiant, because this was necessary in order that the Apostle might discern that his deliverer was a holy being. The Scriptures mention numerous appearances of angels as men without radiant appearances. Peter was bidden to rise up. Quickly and simultaneously the chains which bound him to the soldier by either hand were loosed. He was instructed to put on his wooden shoes, or sandals, and to put on his outer garment, or cloak, and to follow his leader. We read that he followed, realizing the facts as those of a dream. Thus he was led past the first and second wards, or doors until they came to the great gate of the city, which opened of its own accord, and then the angel left him.

It is worthy of notice that the miracles performed here were only such as were beyond Peter's natural power. Whatever he could do he was required to do, namely, putting on of his sandals and his cloak, and following the angel. He could have been transported. His own sandals or other sandals could have been fastened to his feet. A new coat might have been provided. But the lesson is a more profitable one as it was given. Similarly in the Lord's dealings with us today, we should remember that it is ours to do everything within our power, and the Lord's to overrule all things for our good, and to supply our deficiencies from his abundance. Thus still he gives us day by day our daily bread, in the rain and the sunshine and the seed; but he expects us to labor for it, to plow the ground, to sow the seed, to harrow it, to thrash it, grind it and bake it.

"When Peter was come to himself," when he realized the facts of the case, that he was free, he said, "Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod and . . . of the Jews." St. Peter's faith was strengthened. Willing to die, he found that the Lord was willing that he should live and labor and endure, and he was equally pleased, rejoicing, we may be sure, for the privilege of further service, even though it would mean further sacrifices and sufferings for the Lord's sake and for the sake of his people.

Doubtless the angel started Peter in the direction of Mary's home, where the prayer was being made on his behalf. The description of the house with an outer gate implies that it was one of the better class. Peter's knock was heard by little Rose, for such is the meaning of Rhoda. So overjoyed was she that, forgetful to let him in, she ran first to tell the praying household that Peter was at the gate. Expecting no deliverance at such an hour, some thought the maiden mistaken, and then insisted that it must be his angel—in harmony with the prevalent thought that an angel had supervision of each individual of God's people and that such might personate the one under his protection.

The brethren were surprised at the Lord's answer to their petitions, because it came so unexpectedly as respects time. There was an outburst of excitement and questions, which the Apostle was obliged to silence by the shaking of his hands. Then he narrated the wonderful story of his deliverance and bade them tell it to the other James, the brother (cousin) of Jesus, and the other disciples. Then Peter went his way, whether to another city or to another house, we do not know. In any event, he exercised wisdom in not needlessly provoking Herod. There was consternation with the coming of daylight. Later on in the same chapter we learn of another visit of the angel of the Lord—this second time to smite Herod with disease (intestinal worms), from which he subsequently died. This chapter then shows us the power of Satan, the power of God, and the power of prayer.

The Golden Text

Of course, our Golden Text is a symbolical statement illustrative of the Divine guardianship of all those who are truly his. The thought is the continual supervision of our affairs by the Lord. Whether we think of the angel of the Lord as one of the heavenly host specially appointed on our behalf, or whether we think of him from the standpoint of the various powers of nature, the levers of which are all in the Divine care, it matters not. We have the assurance that the Father himself loves us and that all the heavenly powers are pledged to those whom he has accepted in Christ Jesus, and these unitedly guarantee blessings to all those who abide in God's love. This means to abide in faith in the Redeemer. It means to abide loyal to our consecration, to do the Father's will to the extent of our ability. That will is declared to be that we shall love the Lord supremely, our neighbor as ourselves, and all the members of the household of faith, as Christ loved us. Z. '09:73-75.

The Apostle urges that each individual Christian should seek to bear his own burden rather than to lean upon the Brethren. Each is to remember his own personal responsibility and not to get weary in well doing. Z. '16:153.

The Lord has never left His people without teachers of His own choosing, who were able to lead the dear sheep of the great Shepherd's Fold into the green pastures where they could obtain whatever food was needed at that time. Z. '15:151.

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FRUITS, NOT CHIPS, SHOULD FILL OUR MENTAL BASKETS

We all remember the familiar story of the boy who was very fond of reading novels, and whose father wished to impress a valuable lesson upon his mind. One day he said to his son, "John, empty that basket of apples in the corner; then go and fill the basket with chips." The boy did so, and brought in the basket filled with chips. "Now," said the father, "put all the apples also into the basket." The surprised boy said, "Father, I cannot put the apples in while the chips are there." "No," said the father, "and your mind is just like that basket. It can hold only so much; and if you fill it with chips, there will be no room for other and better things."

This was a wise father; he gave his son a good suggestion. You and I, as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, should fill our minds with the glorious heavenly things—the Heavenly hopes, the Heavenly ambitions, the Heavenly affections. All these earthly things are but as chips in comparison. The mind and the heart filled with chips cannot contain the fruits of the Spirit. If we fill our baskets with the Heavenly loves and joys, the spiritual treasures, we shall have that which is transcendently above any earthly love and joy. Z. '16 : 164.

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Notwithstanding the difficulties of life, these (the inhabitants of Zion) can continue to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord. They rejoice no matter what may be the outward earthly conditions. They can smile even through their tears, knowing that, according to His promise, all things are working together for their good. Z. '16 : 183.

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"I am more and more impressed with the necessity in these days of feeding only on 'clean provender" (Isa. 30 : 24), and letting severely alone all those various writings that multiply the danger in these perilous times (2 Tim. 3 : 11), and especially such as come under false pretensions as messengers of light."—2 Cor. 11 : 13-15. Z. '92 : 79.

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Our consecration is a consecration to do the will of God, to be dead to any other will, whether our own natural will or the will of another. Z. 15 : 147.

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By seeking to know God's will in order to do it, the Lord's people are preparing themselves for the glorious inheritance of the faithful. **Fortified by development of character, these will not fall,** no matter what the trial that the Lord may permit to come upon them. The Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Church at Ephesus, speaks of some who will be able to stand in the **"evil day,"** and implies that a great many at that time will not be able to **stand.** He declares that those who hope to stand will need to put on the "whole armor of God." The various pieces of the Christian's armor will then be indispensible, and he intimates that only those fully armored would be ready for the onslaughts of that Day. Z. '15 : 134.

Each individual is responsible for the care of his own mind. Z. '16 : 169.

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Only God's Covenant people can appreciate Him and His arrangements. He is in **their** midst only. Z. '15 : 137.

◆

How earnestly we as children of God should watch and pray that we may indeed be fitted for our great future work—**now so near!** Z. '15 : 6.

◆

Let us remember that **we** may be altogether unaware of some of our own weaknesses and mannerisms, which may grate upon others. We should be much more careful to note our own mistakes and faults than those of other brethren of the Lord. Z. '15 : 6.

◆

Those who have put their trust in the Lord have a peace that the world cannot know and cannot take away. It is superior to anything the world can offer. But we cannot explain this to the world. They would be unable to comprehend it. The world sometimes say of the Lord's consecrated people, "Is he a fool?" They cannot understand our hopes, which are so blessedly real to us. Those who have entered the School of Christ, and who have learned of Him, know. We all know that for everything which we deny ourselves now our God gives us abundant compensations in our spiritual blessings and joys even here; and then we have all the unspeakable glories promised to His saints awaiting us just beyond the veil.

"Then let our hearts be surely fixed
Where truest joys are found;
And let our burning, loving praise
Yet more and more abound.
And gazing on 'the things unseen,'
Eternal in the skies,
From glory unto glory,
O Savior, may we rise!"—Z. '16 : 229.

◆

Everything throughout the Scriptures indicates that the Lord especially loves and appreciates those who are thorough-going, not only in their zeal for righteousness and truth, but also in their opposition to unrighteousness and error. Z. '16 : 233.

◆

How important it is that all of the Lord's Flock, and especially the Elders, take heed to themselves and scrutinize their conduct, and particularly the motives lying behind their deeds! **Let us remember that absolute purity of the will is essential.** Every admixture of selfishness, however little, is a poisonous virus which, if unchecked, would lead to the Second Death. Z. '16 : 236.

◆

We should continually remember that we were bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ, and that his sacrifice and not any works that we could do are the basis of our acceptance with God—that by his stripes we are healed. **Z. '04 : 331.**

Helpful Thoughts From The Volumes

Those who discard the robe seem anxious to have others do the same, and these strive while the faithful remonstrate; and the work of division goes on, even in the very guest-chamber; **and doubtless it will continue up to the very last hour prior to the marriage.** "C.," page 202.

◆

To be the very last one of those to be "changed" will be no discredit. "C.," page 235.

◆

The Apostle Peter declares the Church to be "elect (chosen) through sanctification (setting apart) of the Spirit unto obedience." (1 Pet. 1:2.) The thought here is that those whom God now recognizes as his chosen ones . . . are chosen, not arbitrarily, but according to fixed principles, **viz.**, that if the holy Spirit of God (influence of the truth) operating upon them bring them to the condition of full obedience (sanctification) to the Father's will and plan and providence, then they shall constitute the elect. "E.," page 243.

◆

The Word of God contains both earthly and heavenly promises, only the latter belong to us. Our treasure is in heaven: let our hearts continually be there. "A.," page 203.

◆

Ours is a rugged, steep, narrow way, and were it not that strength is furnished for each successive step of the journey, we could never reach the goal. But our Captain's word is encouraging; Be of good cheer; I have overcome; my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. (John 16:33; 2 Cor. 12:9.) "A.," page 214.

◆

The Spirit of adoption or sealing as sons, the possession of the first-fruits or earnest of the coming inheritance, is, then, one of the most advanced "witnesses" of the Spirit—the very cream of Christian experiences in the presentlife. Before attaining this stage of experience we must receive our share of the **anointing** by coming into the anointed body of Christ, the Church, by being **begotten** of the Spirit of Truth unto sanctification of our spirits to know and do the Lord's will. This experience comes after we have been **quickened** of the Spirit to the service of righteousness: it is an evidence, so to speak, that we have passed from the embryo condition to one in which God can consider us sons and seal us as such. "E.," page 248.

◆

I am persuaded, I have confidence, that we are determined to permit nothing to separate us from the love of God manifested in Christ—neither fear of death nor love of life; and that none of God's other creatures will intercept or turn aside God's favor from us—neither angels nor principalities nor powers at present created or ever to be created. In all these things we are more than victors merely—we are adopted as sons of God on the divine plane, through him who loved us. "F.," page 185.

NOWHERE is this admonition against busybodying more important to be remembered than in the CHURCH. Brethren should speedily learn, from the Word as well as from precept and example of the elders, that it is not the divine intention that they should meddle in each other's business nor discuss each other; but that here, as elsewhere, the divine rule applies, "Speak evil of no man." Busybodying—thinking and talking about the private affairs of others, with which we have no direct concern—leads to evil speaking and back-biting, and engenders anger, malice, hatred, strife, and various works of the flesh, and of the devil, as the Apostle points out. (Col. 3:5-10.) Thus it often is that little seeds of slander are planted and that great roots of bitterness develop, whereby many are defiled. All who have the new mind surely recognize the banefulness of this evil, and all of them should be models in their homes and neighborhoods. The worldly mind can realize that murder and robbery are wrong, but it requires a higher conception of justice to appreciate the spirit of the divine Law—that slander is an assassination of character, and that stealing a neighbor's good name under any pretext is robbery. The worldly-minded grasp this matter to some extent, and their sentiments are represented in the poet's words: "He who steals my purse steals trash; . . . but he who filches my good name steals that which not enriches him, but leaves me poor indeed." "F.," pages 585-586.

◆

EMPHATICALLY the Church is ever guided and fed by God himself, whoever may be his mouthpieces or channels of communication. A realization of this must lead to greater confidence and trust in God's Word, notwithstanding the imperfection of some of his mouthpieces. A., page 319.

◆

While we STAND, as it were on Pisgah's heights, and view the grand prospect just before us, our hearts rejoice in the Lord's great plan, with an unspeakable joy; and though we realize that the Church is still in the wilderness of her humiliation, and that the hour of her actual triumph has not yet fully come, yet, seeing the indications of its **rapid approach**, and by faith already discerning the Bridegroom's presence, we lift up our heads and rejoice, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh. Oh, what fullness of blessing and cause for joy and thanksgiving this truth contains! "C," page 134.

◆

Every trial of our fidelity should be **joyfully** met as a fresh opportunity to show the Bridegroom the depth and strength of our love, and another proof of worthiness of his love and confidence and of the promised exaltation. "C," 210.

◆

"There are great truths that pitch their shining tents
 Outside our walls, and though but dimly seen
In the gray dawn, they will be manifest
 When the light widens into perfect day."
—"G.," page 463.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER THIRTY-ONE

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A DIFFICULT LESSON FOR MANY

THE CHRISTIAN may very well draw a lesson from Elihu's question. **"When He (Jehovah) giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"** Although the words are not inspired, yet they are very wise. We can recognize the truth they contain—that when God purposes to give peace, quietness, the whole Universe will be in obedience to His laws, and none can make trouble.

If we have difficulties, if we have persecutions, if we have troubles of any kind we should look to God. We should say: This thing could not happen to me unless the Lord permitted it. We have come under special Divine care. God has promised that all things shall work together for good to us who are His children. The lesson of trust is one of those difficult lessons for us to learn and apply—to realize that all of life's experiences are under Divine supervision and that nothing can happen to us but what is for our highest good. This is not now true of the world, but merely of God's family. By and by God will make all things work out blessings for the world.

It is in respect to these who are His children that all things now work for good. When we are in difficulty, we are to look up in confidence and trust to the Lord. Our Heavenly Father wishes us to exercise faith in Him. St. Peter tells us that we are "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." Therefore we greatly rejoice, even "though now for a season we are in heaviness through manifold trials" and temptations. "The trial of your faith is much more precious than that of gold that perisheth."—1 Peter 1:5-7.

Tests of Loyalty and Devotion

When the Lord permits great clouds of trouble to come upon us, we should first look to see if we can discern any wrong-doing in ourselves which might properly bring chastisement. We should have joy in the Lord. But perhaps we have not been living close enough to the Lord. Yet these clouds of affliction do not necessarily mean that we have not been living close to Him, as we have seen in the case of Job.

We remember likewise in the experiences of our Lord Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before His crucifixion, how He said to His disciples, Peter, James and John, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." We remember that God did not give Him quietness, but allowed trouble like a great flood to sweep over His soul. He was troubled to know surely whether He had been entirely loyal, faithful and obedient, as was necessary to maintain the Father's favor. We are told by the Apostle Paul that our Lord Jesus "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death—and was heard."—Hebrews, 5:7.

We find that the Father sent His angel to minister unto His dear Son in His deep distress. As soon as the angel had given our Lord the assurance of the Father that He was well pleasing in His life and conduct, He became perfectly calm. And the assurance sustained Him in all the trying experiences which followed—the trial before the Sanhedrin, before Pilate, the treatment of the soldiers, the journey on the way to Calvary, and in the midst of the trying process of execution which followed.

We can be content to leave our experiences entirely in the hands of Him who loves us, and can have an inward peace and calm and a rest of soul, knowing that no outward storm will be permitted but such as the Father sees will bring forth in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, if we are properly exercised thereby. Z. 14:53:54.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The Convention of Standfast Bible Students assembled at Vancouver, B.C., March 26, 27 and 28, voted unanimously that the general office work and the work of compiling and publishing the OLD CORN GEMS be consolidated at Victoria, B.C.

Please note, therefore, that in future all communications and donations should be sent to STANDFAST BIBLE STUDENTS, P.O. BOX 7, VICTORIA, B.C.

Next GENERAL CONVENTION of STANDFAST BIBLE STUDENTS will be held at VICTORIA, B.C., Saturday, Sunday and Monday, May 22nd, 23rd and 24th, 1920. Further information in Old Corn Gems, 32, or write to Brother J. H. Bartlett, P.O. Box 7, Victoria, B.C., Secretary of Convention.

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In order that all may be kept in touch with the Standfast activities everywhere, it is requested that all class secretaries kindly send a monthly report at the first of each month to the Victoria, B.C., office. The main features of which reports will be incorporated in the committee's monthly report.

Brother W. B. Palmer attended the Vancouver Convention, where his services were much appreciated. He has decided before returning East to adopt the following route. Duncans, Victoria, Vancouver, Port Mann, Fort Langley, Agassiz, Fairview, Penticton, Cranbrook, Trail, Spokane, Pullman, Kenniwick, Prosser, Yakima, Seattle, Tacoma, Bellingham, Linden, Blaine, Vancouver, Victoria Convention.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER THIRTY-ONE

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18 : 51.

The Prayers of the New Creation

PRAYER TO GOD, communion with Him, is a great privilege and an evidence of His favor. God does not grant us this privilege, however, in order that He might be informed of our desires, for since we are imperfect ourselves our desires cannot be perfect: "We know not what things to ask for as we ought;" and He does for us better than we know how to ask or think. Nor does God permit us to pray to Him that we may inform Him regarding matters here; for He knoweth the end from the beginning, as well as every intervening step. But He has instituted prayer for our benefit and comfort and instruction.

The object of prayer is to bring the heart and the mind of the child of God into contact with the heart of God, that he may be enabled thus most fully to realize the Fatherhood of God, His love and His deep interest in every item of our welfare; that in deep affliction we may unburden our hearts to God and thus have forcibly brought to our attention His love and care and wisdom—for **our** encouragement, not **His**; for our strengthening, not **His**, and for **our** joy.

This opportunity is not for us to instruct Jehovah how to arrange matters for the best, but to bring our hearts to realize Him as the Center of wisdom and power, that having unburdened our hearts, we may be prepared to listen for His answer and advice through His Word. And he whose knowledge of prayer is confined to the meager information he has imparted to God with "much speaking," and who has never learned to listen for the answer to his prayer from the Word of God, has, as yet, measurably failed to appreciate the object of prayer.

Earnestness in God's service will bring His children to Him frequently, to realize at His feet His sympathy with them in the difficulties, discouragements and trials of life, as well as to ask His guidance and overruling of every affair of life, and through His Word to hearken to His wisdom, which will enable them to serve Him acceptably.

The province of prayer is to ask for only such things as God has already declared Himself well pleased to grant. And while we may freely speak to Him as a Father, and tell Him how we understand His Word, and the confidence and trust we have in its ultimate fulfilment, yet we must not only avoid telling the Lord of **our** will and **our** plans, and what **we** would like, but we must avoid and put far from us **any such spirit**, and must recognize, and bring ourselves into full accord with His will and His plan for accomplishing it. If this thought were appreciated, it would cut short some of the "long prayers," "much speaking," and "vain repetitions" by which some endeavor to instruct the Lord in **their** wishes regarding every matter under heaven. It would send them speedily to the Word of God to search diligently the Plan of God that they might labor as well as pray in harmony with it.

While assuring us that the Father cares for us, and is well pleased to have us come to Him with sincere hearts, the Master informs us of the conditions upon which we may expect an answer. He says, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."—John 15 : 7.

"Abide in Me"

The conditions of the above statement, or promise, are two; the first is, **abiding in Christ**. But what is it to **abide in Christ?** Only those can abide in Christ who are **in** Christ, who have come into Him by faith, repentance and consecration; and to abide in Him means that the faith will abide, the repentance for sin and the opposition to it will abide, and the consecration to the Lord and His service will abide, and it will be manifest that our will has been wholly consecrated—swallowed up in the will of Christ.

The other condition is also a weighty one: "If My Word abide in you." Ah! how evident it is that our Lord meant to associate Himself and His Word, the Scriptures, in the minds, in the hearts, in the lives of all who are truly His! They must search the Scriptures to know the will of the Lord; to know what He has promised and what He has **not** promised; to know what they may ask and what they may **not** ask: and, ascertaining these, one fully consecrated—one controlled entirely by the will of God—will not want to **be,** to **have,** or to **do** anything except that which will be pleasing to the Lord in respect to himself.

When this position has been reached, the will of Christ governing him, the words of Christ abiding in him, we can readily see that whatever would be asked by one thus well informed with respect to the Divine promises and fully submissive to the Divine will would be things which the Father would be pleased to grant in answer to his requests.

These requests would probably be as simple as was the Master's petition when He prayed, "Not **My will,** but **Thine,** be done!" (Luke 22:42.) In such a condition prayers are **always** answered; but in such a condition the prayers would be very modest. One's prayers under such circumstances would be more a thanksgiving for blessings, an expression of confidence and trust, and the committal of his way unto the Lord, confidently realizing the promise that to him under such conditions, **all things** (even seeming disasters and troubles) shall work together for good. Hence, whatever came, such a one could realize his prayer answered. He could rejoice evermore because he is prepared to rejoice in tribulation as well as in prosperity, in the path of service. He has no will to oppose whatever God permits, knowing that it will work out good.

Such, amongst the Lord's people, **could** not pray that their own will be done; for they **have no will** except **God's.** Those who abide in Christ, and in whom His Word abides, can pray for their enemies and those who despitefully use them and persecute them, though they cannot pray God to open the blinded eyes of their enemies at once, nor in **their** way. Realizing from the indwelling Word of God's promise that the blinded eyes shall all be opened to the Truth, they can abide His time. Going to God in prayer they may express their forgiveness of their persecutor, their interest in him, and their patient waiting for the day when "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea"—**ocean deep**—and His will shall be done on earth even as it is done in heaven.—Isa. 11:9.

Answers Often Delayed

The answer to our prayer is not always granted immediately; but after we have made sure that our requests are in accord with the promises, those things which lie very close to our hearts become our continual prayer, associating in our minds with all of life's duties and interests, the heart gravitating continually toward the thing we have desired of the Lord, and on suitable opportunities repeating to Him the request. This is the kind of prayer which the Lord commended, saying, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." (Luke 18:1.) The Lord's people ought to continue asking for the right things with some degree of persistency, and should not grow weary, hopeless, faithless, faint in their hearts.

Doubtless there are many reasons why the Lord does not promptly grant all of our requests which are in accordance with His will, in harmony with His Word. We may not know all of these reasons; but some of them are apparent. Undoubtedly one reason for the Lord's delay in answering us is often to test the strength and the depth of our desires for the good things that we request of Him.

For instance, He informs us that He is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to us who ask than are earthly parents to give good things to their children. Yet the giving of His Holy Spirit is a gradual process: and we are enabled to receive it only in proportion as we are emptied of the worldly or selfish spirit. It requires time to become thus emptied of self and prepared for the mind of Christ; in some it requires longer for this than in others; but all need emptying in order to receive the refilling.

He that seeketh findeth, but the more he seeketh the more he findeth: to him that knocketh it shall be opened, but his continual knocking and his increasing interest in the knocking means his increasing desire to enter, so that as the door of privilege swings slowly open before him, his courage and his strength increase as he seeks to avail himself of the opening. Thus every way the blessing is greater than if the Lord were to answer the petitions hastily.

We are to think of our Heavenly Father as rich and benevolent, kind and generous, yet **wise** as well as **loving.** We are to suppose that He will have pleasure in giving us the desires of our hearts if those desires are in harmony with His plan, which He has already framed on such lines as to include not only our very highest and best interests, but the highest and best interests of all His creatures. Then, whatever comes, His well-informed children can have all the desires of their hearts, because their hearts are in full accord with the Lord; and they desire nothing of the Lord except the good things of His purpose and promise.

"Desire, Uttered or Unexpressed"

When thus considered, not as a begging arrangement, nor as an occasion of instructing the Lord as to our wills, but as a season of union and communion of heart with the Father, in which we may relieve our burdened or perplexed hearts and realize Divine sympathy, calling to mind Divine promises, reviewing Divine care, and expressing our confidence in God's many promises, thus bringing those promises afresh and close to our hearts; as though God now audibly uttered them in our hearing—thus considered, how proper, yea, how necessary is prayer to the true child of God! **He cannot live without it.** To break off this communion would be like stripping a tree of its leaves; their removal would stunt and hinder it.

But to suppose that Christian life depends **solely** upon prayer without earnest study of God's Word, is like supposing that a tree could flourish from its leaves only, without roots and soil. Both are needful. As good soil and roots will produce leaves and fruitage, so, likewise, the promises of God's Word absorbed by us will naturally lead to good works and to communion with God in prayer, without which the fruits of the Spirit would soon wither and disappear.

No wonder, then, that Jesus both by precept and by example said, "Watch and pray" (Matt. 26:41). Some **pray** and neglect to **watch**; others **watch** and neglect to **pray**. Both these errors are serious; and it is not possible for us to decide which is the more serious neglect, since either would work disastrous loss.

Nowhere is prayer defined as a **duty**, though its **necessity** is stated. The Father desireth such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23); and it would be contrary to this principle to define prayer as a duty, and to stipulate a set time or place or a formal manner. The earnestness of the service and the peculiarity of the circumstance will regulate the frequency and the subject matter of prayer.

No form of prayer is furnished in the Scriptures. Even the Master, when asked by the disciples for instruction on the subject, gave them, not a **form** to repeat, but merely an idea or example of how to arrange their prayers to God. He did not say, Pray this prayer, but, "After **this manner** pray ye." Our prayers, then, should be after this **manner**—not an assortment of extravagant demands, but the simple expression of the earnest heart: first, acknowledging and paying homage to God as our Father, the Almighty and Hallowed One; second, expressing our expectation and trust that His Kingdom is coming according to promise, and our eagerness for it, and for the time when His will shall be done on earth as in Heaven; third, our reliance upon Him for "daily bread," which He has promised us; fourth, our acknowledgment that our ways are not perfect and of our reliance upon His favor (granted through Christ Jesus) for forgiveness; and our willingness to exercise forgiveness toward our debtors, toward those who trespass against us.

"Our Father, Which Art in Heaven"

The term, "Our Father," is one of special endearment. The affection of a true father for his child, being one of the most precious in the world, is used to illustrate the relationship of the Lord's consecrated members to the Creator. It is necessary to be some time in the School of Christ as disciples, learners, before we are able properly to appreciate the meaning of this word "Father" as applied to God; but the more we come to know of the love of God, which passes all understanding, and the more we are enabled to draw near to Him through faith and obedience, the more precious will this term Father become.

"Hallowed by Thy name," expresses adoration, appreciation of Divine goodness and greatness, and a corresponding reverence. In addressing our petition to the Lord our first thought is to be, not a selfish one respecting ourselves, nor respecting the interests of others precious to us; but God is to be first in all of our thoughts and aims and calculations. We are to pray for nothing that would not be in accord with the honor of our Heavenly Father's Name; we are to wish for nothing for ourselves or for our dear ones that He would not fully approve and commission us to pray for.

Perhaps no quality of heart is in more danger of being blotted out amongst professing Christians today than this thought of **reverence** for God. However much we have grown in knowledge, and however much we have gotten free from superstitions and errors, and however advanced in some respects is the Christian's position of today over that of a century ago, we fear that reverence has been losing ground, not only in the nominal Church, but with many of the members of the one "Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in heaven." (Heb. 12:23.) Every loss of reverence is a distinct disadvantage, both to the Church and to the world, paving the way to various evils, and ultimately to anarchy.

As God and His glory and honor are to be first in the minds of His children, so their next thought should be for the coming glorious Kingdom, which He has promised shall bless the world. However much our own personal interests and affairs may be pressing upon us, and however much we may desire to have the Lord's blessing and guidance in them, they are not to outrank our appreciation of His beneficent arrangements which He has so clearly promised in His Word. We are to remember that the Kingdom, when it shall come, will be a panacea for every ill and every trouble, not only for us, but for the whole world of mankind. We are not, therefore, to permit our own personal needs to be too prominent, but are to remember that the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain together, waiting for this glorious Kingdom and the blessing upon all the families of the earth, which our Heavenly Father has promised shall yet come through the Seed of Abraham.

This thought respecting the Kingdom, its necessity, and the blessings that it will bring will keep prominently before our minds our own High Calling to joint-heirship with our Lord in this Kingdom. And in proportion as that hope is clearly before our minds it will be, as the Apostle explains, as "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."—Heb. 6:19.

This anchorage of hope in the future, in the Kingdom, will enable us to pass safely, and with comparative quiet, through the trials and storms and difficulties of this present evil world. More than this, our thoughts respecting the Kingdom will remind us that if we are to be heirs of the Kingdom it will be necessary that we have the appropriate discipline and training **now**. This thought in turn will make all the afflictions and trials of this present time seem to us light afflictions; for we know that they are working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Thus the very offering of this prayer in its proper order will bring us a measure of relief from our perplexities, trials and disappointments before we reach the appropriate place to mention them at the Throne of grace.

"Thy Will Be Done on Earth"

This petition offered from the heart implies that the one offering it has made a full consecration of his will, his heart, to the Lord; and that as he hopes for the Kingdom by and by to come and subdue all unrighteousness and to establish the Divine will from sea to sea, and from pole to pole, so now, the petitioner, being in accord with the Lord's will, and thus wishing that it might be universally in control, will see to it that this will is ruling in his own heart; that in his own affairs God's will is done to the best of his ability in his earthly condition, even as he hopes to have it perfected in the Kingdom soon to be established.

No one can intelligently and honestly offer this petition, unless he both desires and endeavors to have the Lord's will done in himself while on earth. Thus a blessing comes to the one who offers this petition before he has asked any special blessing upon himself or others. **The mere thought of the Divine arrangement brings a blessing, a peace, a rest, a satisfaction of heart.**

"Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread"

The thought in this petition seems to be that of continual dependance upon the Lord, day by day, for the things needed—accepting for each day the Lord's providential care and direction of our affairs. Daily bread should here be understood in the broad sense of food and raiment—things necessary. The Lord's people, who recognize Him as their Father, must trust Him as children, while seeking to use the various instrumentalities and opportunities within their reach. They are to provide the things necessary for themselves, yet to recognize the Divine provision and care which has pre-arranged matters so as to make their present conditions and blessings attainable.

Agnosticism and Higher Criticism in general may deny, if they please, Divine providence in connection with the grains and other supplies for man's necessities; but the eye of faith sees behind these supplies the Love, the Wisdom and the Power of God, making ready for man's necessities, and giving the things necessary in such a manner as will be for the advantage of mankind—through sweat of face, etc.

"Forgive Us Our Sins"

To petition the Lord for forgiveness of sins implies that we are at heart opposed to sin, and that any sins committed have not been wilful; and that the Lord, according to His Covenant of grace with us, agrees to accept the intentions of our hearts instead of the actual, full, complete, perfect obedience to the Divine requirement, in thought, in word and in act. This petition, then, signifies that we recognize that the Robe of Christ's righteousness granted to us has become spotted or sullied; and that we desire to be cleansed, so that we may again be "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." This cannot refer to wilful sins, for as the Apostle explains, "If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," and hence, no more a basis for forgiveness; and the end of wilful sin is the Second Death. (Heb. 10:26.) It is, however, proper to remark that there are what might be termed **mixed sins**—sins in which a measure of wilfulness may have combined with a measure of ignorance or inherited weakness.

In the case of such sins the Lord expresses His willingness to cancel the wrong upon its being promptly repented of; but He reserves to Himself the giving of stripes, or chastisements appropriate and necessary to His child as an instruction in righteousness and correction of weaknesses, etc.

Happy are they who, with growth in grace and knowledge, find their hearts so fully in accord with the principles of the Divine arrangement that they will never transgress with any measure of wilfulness; but blessed also are those who, finding some measure of wilfulness in their deflection from the Divine rule, are pained thereby, and who, as the Apostle says, are led to discipline or correct themselves that they may the more quickly learn the lessons, and bring their bodies more completely into subjection to the new mind—"I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."—1 Cor. 9:27; 11:31.

"Those Who Trespass Against Us"

As we are imperfect and cannot keep the Divine Law, so likewise others are imperfect. As the degrees of deflection from the Divine Law vary with the degrees of the fall, so also we must expect that the trespasses of ourselves and others, one against another, will vary, according to the natural temperament, weakness, etc. As we realize that we have received, and will still need Divine compassion and mercy in respect to our shortcomings, so the Lord teaches us that we must exercise similar benevolence toward our fellow creatures, both in the Church and outside.

Elsewhere He lays down this rule very stringently, that if we do not from our heart forgive those trespassing against us, neither will our Heavenly Father forgive us our trespasses. Thus the Lord would develop in His consecrated people the spirit of the Father, even as He instructed us, saying, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."—Matt. 5:48.

Perfection is to be the standard. However far short of it we may come, we can have no **lower standard**; and in proportion as we are striving for that standard and realize our own weaknesses and imperfections, we should have proportionate compassion upon fellow creatures and their shortcomings toward us. This is love, sympathy, compassion; and whoever does not attain this degree of love which will have compassion upon others and their weaknesses, and which would be ready and glad to forgive them, is deficient in love; and whoever does not succeed in this matter to the extent of being able to love his enemies, so as to even pray for them, that person fails to reach the mark of character which the Lord demands, and he may be sure that his own deviations from perfect rectitude will not be overlooked; for he is lacking in the one important quality of love, which covers a multitude of sins of every kind. None, surely, will gain a place in the Kingdom class, in the Bride class, except those who have this forgiving quality, this quality of love.

"Bring Us Not Into Temptation"

We are to remember the words of the Apostle (James 1:13) to the effect that God tempteth no man, and are to apply this thought to our prayer.

So our prayer will not signify that we fear that God will tempt us; but that **we entreat** Him that He may guide our steps, our cares in life, so that no temptation, no trial, shall come upon us that would be too severe for us; that He may bring us by a way in which we shall not be tempted above that we are able, and provide a way of escape when we are sore distressed. The Apostle assures us that **this is the Divine will**; and that such a prayer would be in accordance with it. He says that God **will not** suffer **us to be tempted above that we are able, but** will with every temptation provide also a way of escape. The temptations are of the Adversary, and of our own fallen natures—through our own flesh, and through the weaknesses of others. God is not responsible for these; but He is able to guide the way of His people that they shall not be overwhelmed in these natural difficulties, weaknesses, besetments, nor by the wiles of the Adversary.

"Deliver Us From the Evil One"

There never was a time when there was greater need of this petition than at the present. The Evil One is specially seeking to trap and ensnare the Lord's people at the present time; and the Scriptures inform us that God is permitting this; and that thus He is sending strong delusions upon the world and upon the nominal church. Our Father is permitting this because the time has come for a complete separation. He has promised, however, that those who are truly of the "wheat" class—the sanctified in Christ Jesus, who are seeking to walk in His steps—shall not be stumbled, shall never fall, but shall have an abundant entrance ministered unto them into the everlasting Kingdom. The question, then, is one of loyalty of heart to the Lord.

The trial of this "day shall try the work of every man [in the Church] of what sort it is." This trial will be so severe that if it were possible the "very elect" would be deceived; but this will not be possible; for the Lord will specially care for these. Nevertheless, the Lord will be inquired of by His people in respect to these matters which He has already promised, and as they **pray**, "Deliver us from the Evil One," they surely will **labor** in the same direction. It is our expectation that very shortly now the forces of evil will gain much greater strength than at present, "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." Meantime the Lord is staying the adverse forces that His true people may be able to stand when the evil day shall come. Z. '12: 77-81.

"Because the Days are Evil"

Eph. 5: 15, 16.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

THE WORD "circumspect" is from **circum**, signifying **around**, and **spectus**, signifying to **look**, to **watch**. The true Christian pathway is so narrow, so beset with tests and pitfalls and wiles of the evil one, that, if we walk carelessly even (not to say wickedly), we will be in great danger of mishap. It requires not only that we look all around at every step, but, more than this, it requires that we be wise,—wiser than our fellow creatures of earth,—wise with the wisdom that cometh from above, which is pure, peaceable, loving; yet first of all loyal to the Lord and his Word. . . .

We now wish to call attention to some general principles, **applicable to every member of the body of Christ, at every time; and especially necessary to be remembered and practiced at the present time,** because of the special activity of our Adversary;—"because the days are evil." . . .

Helpful Rules for Daily Life

The rules we have to suggest are as follows:—

I. Let each resolve to mind his own business.

The Scriptural injunctions along this line caution us not to be busy-bodies in other people's affairs. Everyone of experience in life has learned that this is a good rule; yet few walk by this rule, circumspectly. If we have not sufficient of our own business and of the Lord's service to fill our hands and moments and mouths, there is something wrong with us that needs careful prayer and study of the divine Word to set right.

This does not mean that we should be indifferent to the welfare of others under our care, or for whom we are in any degree responsible; but, even in doing for these we should be careful to recognize their rights and the rights of others, and specially careful not to exceed our own rights. Let us never forget that **justice** must govern in our interferences with the affairs of others, though we may not require full justice in respect to our own interests, but exercise mercy.

II. We should exercise great patience with others and their faults—more than in dealing with ourselves and our own short-comings.

When we remember that the whole world is mentally as well as physically and morally unsound through the fall, it should make us very considerate for their failings. Since the Lord is graciously willing to cover our blemishes with the merit of the precious blood, we cannot do less than be "very pitiful" and of tender compassion towards others;—even though their failings be greater or different from our own. This general rule is specially applicable to your own children. Their defects to some extent came from you or through you; hence, in dealing with their faults, you should do just as in correcting your own faults,—earnestly, rigorously, for their correction in righteousness, but sympathetically, mercifully, lovingly.

III. Do not be touchy and easily offended. Take a kindly, charitable view of the words and acts of others. A trifling slight or rebuff could well be passed unnoticed—covered with the mantle of generosity and love. A serious offense should be assumed to be **unintentional**, and inquiry should be kindly made in words that would not stir up anger, but in "speech seasoned with grace." In a majority of cases it will prove that no offense was meant.

This rule in the Scriptures comes under the instructions not to indulge in "evil surmisings,"—imagining evil intentions and motives behind the words and acts of others. "Evil surmisings" is ranked by the Apostle as contrary to the words of our Lord Jesus, opposed to godliness, and of the same spirit as envy and strife—of a corrupt mind, works of the flesh and the devil.—1 Tim. 6:3-5; Gal. 5:19-21.

Love the Law of the Spirit

The other side of this subject is brought out by the Apostle's injunction respecting the elements of the spirit of love, of which God's people are begotten and which they are to cultivate daily,—the development of which is one of the chief proofs of their being "overcomers." He says, "Love suffereth long and is kind. . . . is not easily offended, **thinketh no evil,** . . . beareth all things, believeth all things [favorably], hopeth all things, endureth all things."

It may be urged that such a disposition would be imposed upon frequently, by the evilly disposed. We reply that those who possess this spirit of love are not necessarily obtuse nor soft: their experiences in cultivating this degree of love have served to develop them and make them of "quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." They will be **cautious** where there is even the appearance of evil, even while avoiding the imputation of evil intentions until forced to concede them by indisputable evidence. Besides, it would be better far to take some trifling risks and suffer some slight losses, many times, than to accuse even one innocent person. And the Lord who has directed this course is abundantly able to compensate us for any losses experienced in following his counsel. He is both able and willing to make all such experiences work together for **good** to those who love him. He places **obedience** to his arrangements first (even before sacrifice) saying, "Ye are my disciples, **if ye do** whatsoever I command you."

Whoever neglects the Lord's commands along this line of "evil surmisings" weaves a web for his own ensnarement, however "circumspectly" he may walk as respects other matters; for a heart impregnated with doubt and suspicion toward fellow creatures is more than half prepared to doubt God; the spirit of sourness and bitterness implied is at war with the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love. Either the one or the other will conquer. The wrong spirit must be gotten rid of, or it will defile the new creature and make of him a "castaway." On the contrary, if the new nature conquer, as an "overcomer," it will be along this line: if evil surmisings are overcome, half the battle against present difficulties and besetments is won. The surmisings are from the heart, and lead us either to good words and acts, or to evil words and acts.

IV. If you have been slandered, you may explain, to set yourself right, either publicly or privately; but surely avoid doing more than this. If you slander in return you make two wrongs out of one. Let no man render evil for evil to any one;—no, not even if what you should tell be the truth, while what your neighbor told was falsehood. And in contradicting and explaining false charges, remember not to go beyond this to make countercharges against your defamer; for thus you also would become a slanderer.

The Golden Rule

This is the Scriptural rule. We are to do unto others as **we would** that they should do unto us, and not **as they do** unto us. The wrongs done toward us will never justify wrong doing on our part. God's true children are to have no sympathy with Satan's delusion—"Do evil that good may result." But while no Scripture forbids our explaining away the errors and false statements of slanderers, experience proves that, if we followed Satan and his deluded servants of unrighteousness around, to contradict every adverse criticism and evil report, we should be kept more than busy.

Rather let us commit our reputation to the Lord, as a part of the sacrifice we laid at his feet when we surrendered all in obedience to the "call" to run the race for the great prize of our high calling. If thus we suffer some loss of reputation, by reason of our resolution not to neglect the King's business to fight for our own tinsel, we may be sure that it will count with him as so much **endured** for Christ's sake; and so much the more will be our reward in heaven, when the battle is over and the victors are crowned.

Meantime, however, it behooves each of the Lord's people to be as circumspect as possible at every step of the way. **Remember that in proportion to faithfulness and zeal in letting the light shine we will have the malignant opposition of our great Adversary, who seeks to turn and twist and maliciously distort and discolor our every word and act**;—because the accuser of the brethren can find no real charges; and because he is exceeding mad against the humble servants of the truth, as he was against the Chief Servant—our Lord. He, let us remember, was crucified as a law-breaker, at the instance of the prominent ones of the church, and betrayed to them by one of his own disciples.

"Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds" when attacked by the Adversary,—whoever may be his agents and whatever their missiles. He cannot harm but will only increase our reputation in the Lord's sight, if we endure faithfully; and he can do no outward harm that God cannot overrule for the **good** of his cause—though that good may sometimes mean "siftings."

V. Evil speaking, backbiting and slandering are strictly forbidden to God's people, as wholly contrary to his spirit of love—even if the evil thing be true. As a preventive of anything of the nature of slander, the Scriptures very carefully mark out **one only way of redress of grievances,** in Matt. 18:15-17.

Even advanced Christians seem to be utterly in ignorance of this divine ruling, and hence professed Christians are often the most pronounced scandalmongers. **Yet this is one of the few special, specific commandments given by our Lord; and considered in connection with the statement, Ye are my disciples IF YE DO whatever I command you, its constant violation proves that many are not far advanced in discipleship.** . . .

The duties of one member cannot be undertaken by another,—each must act for himself according to the Lord's rule. But if in violation of the Lord's command a matter become a scandal and be troubling the Church and disgracing it as a whole, then the properly chosen representatives of the company should take the matter up. They should not only investigate the principals in the difficulty, but with equal diligence they should investigate the real troublers who had **circulated the scandal** and should reprove them.

But all reproofs should be in love, remembering that all are imperfect in some particulars. The object in every case should be to **correct** not to **punish**. The Lord alone has the authority to punish. At very most the Church may for a time withdraw fellowship with the unrepentant, and must as publicly restore it when repentance is manifest. Our love, joy, peace are the ends sought by the Lord, and these we must follow as his disciples. Any other course will surely work injury.

Thus did the Lord guard his true disciples from the insidious sin of slander, which leads onward to other and grosser works of the flesh and the devil, and stops growth in the truth and its spirit of love. And let us note, too, that those who **hear** slanders and thus encourage slanderers in their wrong course, are **partakers of their evil deeds**; guilty partners in the violation of the Master's commands. God's true people should refuse to listen to slanders and should point the offender to the Lord's Word and the **only** method therein authorized. "Are we wiser than God?" **Experience teaches us that we cannot trust to our own judgments and are on safe ground only when following the voice of the Shepherd implicitly.** . . .

VI. God's people should beware of pride as they would avoid the most deadly plague.

This rule, always good, and well backed by Scripture, seems doubly needful to those who are blessed with the light of present truth. This may seem strange: it may be reasoned that the receiving of so much grander views of God's character and plan would make his people feel the more insignificant and humble, the more dependent on divine goodness, the more trustful of God and the less trustful of themselves. And this should be the effect, always and ever: but alas, with very many it is not so.

Many get to feel that the knowledge of the plan of the ages proves them specially wise or great or good: they seem to forget that God hides the truth from the wise and great—that no flesh should glory in his sight. They love the truth selfishly, as dealers love their merchandise, for the sake of what they can get for it. If they cannot hope for wealth in exchange for the truth they can hope for small notoriety—to appear wiser than others. . . .

Grace for the Humble

Beware of all such people; sooner or later, unless they reform, they will fly the track entirely, **and injure more than they ever helped**. God does not wish such people to serve his cause, and will surely permit their vanity to stumble them,—however much their natural ability—and it is generally people of real or fancied ability who are thus afflicted with the spirit of pride and vanity. God opposeth the proud, but showeth his favor to the humble. We call every reader of our publications **to witness** that the author has never boasted of his **wisdom or originality**, either publicly or privately. We have boasted in the **truth**, and shall continue to boast of it—that no human philosophies can hold a candle to its brilliant electric ray; but we have never boasted of being its originator. On the contrary, it is because we did not manufacture it, but because God has revealed it "in due time" as "meat in due season," and because it is so much more wonderful than we or any other human being could originate or concoct, that we have confidence that none other than God is its Author and its Revealer.

If by the grace of God we have in any degree been used by him in serving present truths to others, we rejoice in the **service**, and will continue to strive to be faithful to our stewardship: but as for vanity on this account, we see no room or reason for it. We are well aware that our Master could readily have found many others as fit and worthy of the service, and many more capable naturally: we can only suppose, therefore, that herein as previously—"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty, . . . and the things that are despised . . . to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence."—1 Cor. 1:27-29.

We therefore caution all who by the grace of God have been translated out of darkness into God's marvelous light, that they walk proportionately the more humbly before the Lord: because, if the light received should become darkness, how great would be the darkness, and how hopeless the condition! It would, as the Apostle declares, be better for such never to have known the way of life. If salt lose its flavor it is good for nothing more than sand.

"Blessed Are the Pure in Heart"

VII. Be pure: maintain a conscience void of offence toward God and men. Begin with the heart—the thoughts: harbor no thoughts that in any sense of the word would be evil. To make sure of this, have Christ Jesus as your pattern, well and much before your mind. When evil is obtruded upon you, either from without or from within, lift your heart to him in prayer for the grace promised to help in every time of need. **Keep constantly near you the thought and prayer, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."**

VIII. While treasuring and seeking to follow the various specific commands of Scripture, let us seek more and more to understand and come into sympathy with the **principles which underlie** the divine law: this will enable us to judge of the right and the wrong of such of our words, thoughts and acts as may not be particularly specified in the Lord's Word. Indeed, as we get to understand and sympathize with the principles of divine law, to that extent we are getting at the spirit of the divine Word.—See Psa. 119:97-105.

IX. Shun a contentious and fault-finding disposition as contrary to the spirit or disposition of Christ—contrary to love.

A certain amount of combative courage is demanded in overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil and their various snares, and this fighting disposition may become a valuable aid to ourselves and the Master's cause if rightly and wisely directed;—

against sin, first in ourselves and secondly in others; if used for the Lord and his people, and against Satan and all his powers of darkness and superstition. This in the Scriptures is called fighting the good fight: and we all should be gallant soldiers in this battle for right and truth, lovingly defending our Captain's honor and his people's liberties.

Fight the Good Fight

But such a good use of combativeness is not pleasing to the Prince of this world, and he will seek to pervert what he cannot directly use. Consequently he attempts with some to make combativeness appear a chief virtue: he encourages them to fight everything and everybody:—the brethren more than the powers of darkness. Indeed his desire is to get us to "fight against God."

Let us be on guard on this point. Let us first of all **judge ourselves** lest we cast a stumbling block before others: let us fight down in our own hearts the wrong spirit which seeks to make mountains out of trifles and disposes us to be captious and contentious over littles and nonessentials. "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." Let us guard ourselves that our defense of the truth be not from motives of self glorification: but from love for the truth, love for the Lord and love for his people, the brethren. If love be the impelling spirit or motive, it will show itself accordingly, in loving, gentle, patient, humble efforts toward the fellow-servants; and let us be "gentle toward all." Let "the sword of the spirit, the Word of God," which is quick and powerful, do all the **cutting.**

X. Beware of all thoughts, feelings and conditions directly or remotely connected with malice, envy, strife, hatred. Give these no place in your heart even for a moment; for they will surely do you great injury, aside from leading to the injury of others. Keep your heart, your will, your intentions and desires full of love toward God and all his creatures,—the most fervent toward God, and **proportionately** toward all who have his spirit and walk in his directed way.

XI. Do not trust your conscience. If it were a sufficient guide you would have no need of the Scriptures. The majority of people have as good as no conscience; for they are blind to the principles and laws of God given to guide conscience. And still worse off than these are those mentioned in 1 Tim. 4:2. Hence the imperative necessity for carefully heeding the Lord's Word, and walking **circumspectly** according to its light.

XII. Do not be bold, except for the right, the truth. So far as yourself is concerned preserve a reverential **fear**—of sin, and of displeasing the Master, and of losing the great reward—"the prize of our high calling." Nearly all who "fall away" first lose all fear and become **self-confident.** They forget that it is only "If ye **do these things** ye shall never fall." (2 Pet. 1:5-10.) "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1.) Partly because of the loss of this proper **fear,** "It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance." Z. '05:212-216.

Every follower of Jesus should realize that if he has enlisted under the banner of Divine righteousness and truth he has pledged his very life in this service as a soldier of the Cross. How then could he do less than his very best in loving and serving his Heavenly Father with all his mind, being and strength? How could he decline the Divine requirement to love his neighbor as himself—to be kind, generous, not selfish? True, the New Creature may find difficulty in devoting all of his mind and strength to the Lord and in dealing in perfect fairness with all his fellow-creatures. But this is the New Creature's desire and intention, and to accomplish which he must strive daily, and war a good warfare against the natural inherited weaknesses of his old nature—his flesh. **In proportion to his love for the Lord will be his zeal in this warfare; and proportionate also will be the reward that will be given him in the end by the Heavenly Father.** Z. '16:260.

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If this rule be followed, the entire life will thereby be regulated. This rule is—God first, self last! . . . Surely a blessing would follow such an endeavor to put God first, and to forget everything that might be in competition with the Lord in our affection! As for the latter part of this resolution—"self last," this would mean the very essence of the Apostle's admonition, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory" (Philippians 2:3); and again, "in honor preferring one another. (Romans 12:10.) Z. '16:280.

If for **any** reason the Class chooses us to the position of Elder or of Deacon, let us be thankful to the Class and to the Lord; and let us use our privilege as a gift, as a favor, with humility of spirit, remembering that an elder brother in the Class is a **SERVANT** of the Class. Z. '16:280.

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Our Lord's words in the Golden Text should comfort us, as they have comforted his people for the past eighteen centuries: **"In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."** There is no suggestion that we can escape similar tribulation. Indeed, if we escape the sufferings of Christ we will be denied a share in his coming glories. Hence, we should not desire to escape tribulation, but rather go on courageously; nevertheless, not too boastfully, not too courageously, but in meekness, in fear, in trust of the Lord's promises that he has overcome and is able to succor us in temptation's hour, and will do so if we but abide in his love and seek his protection. It is in view of this promised aid that we are exhorted to "be of good cheer." "Greater is he that is for us than all they that be against us." Not only will victory be ours, but, more than this, it is ours already. "Nothing shall by any means hurt you." What may seem to others to be injurious to us, must, under Divine supervision, work out blessings. Z. '09:185.

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Let SELF be more and more eliminated. Z. '16:117.

An Ancient and Interesting Document

Found in the Vatican at Rome (1892), Which Purports to Be the Original Report of Pilate, Roman Governor of Judea, to the Emperor Tiberius Caesar: Explanatory of the Causes Which Led to the Tumult in Jerusalem, in Connection With the Death of Jesus of Nazareth.

THE PUBLIC is indebted to the energy of a Christian minister, W. D. Mahan by name, for calling attention to and securing an English translation of this interesting document. He first heard of it through a German student who had spent a large portion of several years in searching for curiosities in the immense library of the Vatican at Rome. The German Professor did not consider the MS. of sufficient interest to take a copy of it, but years afterward made mention of it to the minister mentioned. The latter felt a great interest in what he had heard, and finally he wrote to his friend, the German Professor, who meantime had returned to Westphalia, Germany, requesting that the latter, who was intimate with Father Freelinhusen—chief guardian of the Vatican—would undertake to procure a translation of the MS. into English.

This was finally accomplished at a cost to Mr. Mahan of seventy-two dollars and forty-four cents.

The parties concerned in procuring this translation are unknown to us, but the circumstances leave no room for questioning the fact.. As to whether or not the Vatican Manuscript is what it purports to be, each must judge for himself. Certain it is that the account does not contradict, but fully corroborates, the accounts given us by the Apostles in the Bible. We give here

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE LETTER, PURPORTING TO BE PILATE'S

To Tiberius Caesar—Emperor.

Noble Sovereign, Greeting:

The events of the last few days in my province have been of such a character that I thought well to report the details as they have occurred, as I should not be surprised if in the course of time they may change the destiny of our nation; for it seems of late that the gods have ceased to be propitious. I am almost ready to say, "Cursed be the day that I succeeded Valerius Gratius in the government of Judea."

On my arrival at Jerusalem I took possession of the Judgment Hall and ordered a splendid feast to be prepared, to which I invited the tetrarch of Galilee, with the high priest and his officers. At the appointed hour no guests appeared. This was an insult offered to my dignity. A few days after, the high priest deigned to pay me a visit. His deportment was grave and deceitful. He pretended that his religion forbade him and his attendants to sit down at the table of the Romans, and to offer up libations with them. I thought it expedient to accept of his excuse, but from that moment I was convinced that the conquered had declared themselves the enemies of the conquerors. It seems to me that of all conquered cities, Jerusalem is the most difficult to govern!

Tz, trärlc

So turbulent were the people that I lived in momentary dread of an insurrection. To repress it I had but a single centurion, and a handful of soldiers. I requested a reinforcement from the Governor of Syria, who informed me that he had scarcely troops sufficient to defend his own province. An insatiate thirst for conquest—to extend our empire beyond the means of defending it—I fear will be the means of overthrowing our noble government.

Among the various rumors that came to my ears, there was one that attracted my attention in particular. A young man, it was said, had appeared in Galilee, preaching with a noble unction a new law, in the name of the gods that had sent him. At first I was apprehensive that his design was to stir up the people against the Romans, but soon were my fears dispelled. Jesus of Nazareth spake rather as a friend of the Romans than of the Jews.

One day, in passing by the place of Siloe, where there was a great concourse of people, I observed, in the midst of the group, a young man who was leaning against a tree, calmly addressing the multitude. I was told that this was Jesus. This I could easily have expected; so great was the difference between him and those who were listening to him. His golden-colored hair and beard gave to his appearance a celestial aspect. He appeared to be about thirty years of age. Never have I seen a sweeter or more serene countenance. What a contrast between him and his hearers with their black beards and tawny complexion. Unwilling to interrupt him by my presence, I continued my walk; but signified to my secretary to join the group and listen. My secretary's name is Manlius. He is the grandson of the chief of the conspirators who encamped in Etruria, waiting Catiline. Manlius was anciently an inhabitant of Judea and well acquainted with the Hebrew language. He is devoted to me and worthy of my confidence. On entering the Judgment Hall, I found Manlius, who related to me the words Jesus had pronounced at Siloe. Never have I heard in the Pettico, nor in the works of the philosophers, anything that can compare to the maxims of Jesus.

One of the rebellious Jews, so numerous in Jerusalem, having asked him if it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar, Jesus replied, "Render unto Caesar the things which belong to Caesar, and unto God the things that are God's." It was on account of the wisdom of his sayings that I granted so much liberty to the Nazarene for it was in my power to have had him arrested and exiled to Pontus; but this would have been contrary to the justice which has always characterized the Romans. This man was neither seditious nor rebellious, and I extended to him my protection unknown, perhaps, to himself. He was at liberty to act, to speak, to assemble and address the people, to choose disciples unrestrained by any Pretorian mandate. Should it ever happen

of all Kings
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—may the gods ever avert the omen—should it ever happen, I say, that the religion of our forefathers be supplanted by the religion of Jesus, it will be to this noble toleration that Rome shall owe her premature obsequies, while I, miserable wretch, shall have been the instrument of what Christians call providence, and we, destiny.

But this unlimited freedom granted Jesus provoked the Jews; not the poor, but the rich and powerful. It is true that Jesus was severe on the latter, and this was a political reason, in my opinion, not to control the liberty of the Nazarene. "Scribes and Pharisees," he would say to them, "you are a race of vipers; you resemble painted sepulchers." At other times, he would sneer at the proud alms of the publican, telling him that the mite of the widow was more precious in the sight of God.

New complaints were daily made at the Judgment Hall against the insolence of the Jews. I was even informed that some misfortune would befall him—that it would not be the first time that Jerusalem had stoned those who called themselves prophets—and if the Pretorium refused justice, an appeal would be made to Caesar.

However, my conduct was approved by the Senate, and I was promised a reinforcement after the termination of the Parthian war. Being too weak to suppress a sedition, I resolved upon adopting a measure that promised to establish the tranquility of the city, without subjecting the Pretorium to humiliating concessions.

I wrote to Jesus requesting an interview with him at the Judgment Hall, and he came. You know that in my veins flows the Spanish, mixed with Roman blood, as incapable of fear as it is of puerile emotion. When the Nazarine made his appearance I was walking in my court, and my feet seemed fastened with an iron hand to the marble pavement, and I trembled in every limb as a guilty culprit, though he was calm—the Nazarene—calm as innocence. When he came up to me, he stopped, and by a signal seemed to say to me, "I am here." For some time I contemplated with admiration and awe this extraordinary type of man—a type of man unknown to our numerous painters, who have given form and figure to all the gods and heroes.

"Jesus," said I to him at last—and my tongue faltered—"Jesus of Nazareth, I have granted you for the last three years ample freedom of speech, nor do I regret it. Your words are those of a sage. I know not whether you have read Socrates, or Plato, but this I know, that there is in your discourses a majestic simplicity that elevates you far above those philosophers. The Emperor is informed of it, and I, his humble representative in this community, am glad of having allowed you that liberty, of which you are so worthy.

"However, I must not conceal from you the fact that your discourses have raised up against you powerful and inveterate enemies. Neither is this surprising. Socrates had his enemies, and he fell a victim to their hatred. Yours are doubly incensed against you on account of your sayings, and against me on account of the liberty extended towards you. They even accuse me of being indirectly leagued with you, for the purpose of depriving the Hebrews of the little civil power which Rome has left them. My request—I do not say my order—is, that you be more circumspect in the future, and more tender in arousing the pride of your enemies, lest they raise against you the stupid populace, and compel me to employ the instruments of justice."

The Nazarene calmly replied:

"Prince of the earth, your words proceed not from true wisdom. Say to the torrent, Stop in the midst of the mountain home! because it will uproot the trees of the valley. The torrent will answer you, that it must obey the laws of the Creator. God alone knows whither flows the torrent. Verily, I say unto you, before the Rose of Sharon blossoms, the blood of the Just shall be spilt." "Your blood shall not be spilt," replied I with emotion, "You are more precious, in my estimation, on account of your wisdom, than all the turbulent and proud Pharisees, who abuse the freedom granted them by the Romans, conspire against Caesar, and construe our bounty into fear. Insolent wretches, they are not aware that the wolf of the timber sometimes clothes himself with the skin of the sheep. I will protect you against them. My Palace of Justice is open to you as an asylum."

Jesus carelessly shook his head, and said, with a grace and a divine smile, "When the day shall have come, there will be no asylum for the Son of Man, neither in the earth, nor under the earth. The asylum of the Just is there," pointing to the heavens. "That which is written in the books of the prophets must be accomplished."

"Young man," answered I, mildly, "you oblige me to convert my request into an order. The safety of the province, which has been confided to my care, requires it. You must observe more moderation in your discourses. Do not infringe. My orders you know. May happiness attend you. Farewell."

"Prince of the earth," replied Jesus, "I came not to bring war into the world, but peace, love and charity. I was born the same day on which Augustus Caesar gave peace to the Roman world. Persecution proceeds not from me. I expect it from others, and will meet it in obedience to the will of my Father, who has shown me the way. Restrain, therefore, your worldly prudence. It is not in your power to arrest the victim at the foot of the Altar of expiation."

So saying, he disappeared like a bright shadow behind the curtains of the palace.

To Herod, who then reigned in Galilee, the enemies of Jesus addressed themselves to wreak their vengeance on the Nazarene. Had Herod consulted his own inclination, he would have ordered Jesus immediately to be put to death; but though proud of his royal dignity, yet he was afraid of committing an act that might diminish his influence with the Senate. Herod called on me one day at the Pretorium, and on rising to take leave, after some insignificant conversation, he asked my opinion concerning the Nazarene. I replied that Jesus appeared to be one of those great philosophers that great nations sometimes produce, that his doctrines were by no means sacrilegious, and that the intention of Rome was, to leave him to that freedom of speech which was justified by his actions. Herod smiled maliciously, and saluting me with an ironical respect he departed.

The great feast of the Jews was approaching, and the intention of their religious rulers was to avail themselves of the popular exultation which always manifests itself at the solemnities of a Passover. The city was overflowing with a tumultuous populace clamoring for the death of the Nazarene. My emissaries informed me that the treasure of the temple had been employed in bribing the people. The danger was pressing. A Roman centurion had been insulted. I wrote to the prefect of Syria for a hundred foot soldiers, and as many cavalry. He declined. I saw myself alone, with a handful of veterans, in the midst of a rebellious city, too weak to suppress a disorder, and having no other choice left but to tolerate it. The seditious rabble had seized Jesus, and although they felt that they had nothing to fear from the Pretorium, believing with their leaders that I winked at their sedition, continued vociferating, "Crucify him! crucify him!

Three powerful parties had combined together at that time against Jesus. First, the Herodians, and the Sadducees, whose seditious conduct seems to have proceeded from double motives: they hated the Nazarene, and were impatient of the Roman yoke. They could never forgive me for having entered their holy city with banners that bore the image of the Roman Emperor, and although in this instance I had ignorantly committed the fatal error, yet the sacrilege did not appear less heinous in their eyes. Another grievance also rankled in their bosoms: I had proposed to employ a part of the treasure of the Temple in erecting edifices of public utility, which proposal was scowled at.

The Pharisees, too, were avowed enemies of Jesus, and they cared not for our government. They bore with bitterness the severe reprimands which the Nazarene, for three years, had been throwing out against them wherever he went. Too weak and pusillanimous to act by themselves, they had eagerly embraced the quarrels of the Herodians and the Sadducees. Besides these three parties, I had to contend against the reckless and profligate populace, always ready to join a sedition, and to profit by the disorder and confusion resulting therefrom.

Jesus was dragged before the High Priest and condemned to death. It was then that Caiaphas, the High Priest, performed a derisory act of submission. He sent his prisoner to me to pronounce his condemnation. I answered him that as Jesus was a Galilean, the affair came under Herod's jurisdiction; and I ordered him to be sent thither. That wily tetrarch professed his humility, and protesting his deference to me, the Lieutenant of Caesar, recommitted the fate of the man to my hands. Soon my palace assumed the aspect of a besieged citadel. Every moment increased the number of seditionists. Jerusalem was inundated with crowds from the mountains of Nazareth. All Judea appeared to be pouring into the devoted city. I had taken a wife—a maiden from among the Gauls—who pretended to see into futurity; she, weeping and throwing herself at my feet, said to me, "Beware, and touch not that man, for he is holy. Last night I saw him in a vision. He was walking on the waters. He was flying on the wings of the winds. He spoke to the tempest and to the fishes of the lake—all were obedient to him. Behold! the torrent of Mount Kedron flows with blood! The statues of Caesar are filled with the filth of Gemonide! The columns of the Interium have given away, and the sun is veiled in mourning, like a vestal of the tomb! O Pilate! evil awaits thee, if thou wilt not listen to the entreaties of thy wife. Dread the curse of a Roman Senate, dread the powers of Caesar."

By this time the marble stairs groaned under the weight of the multitude. The Nazarene was brought back to me. I proceeded to the Hall of Justice, followed by my guard, and asked the people in a severe tone what they demanded. "The death of the Nazarene," was their reply. "For what crime?" "He has blasphemed. He has prophesied the ruin of the temple. He calls himself the Son of God, the Messiah, the King of the Jews." "Roman justice," said I, "punishes not such offences with death." "Crucify him, crucify him!" belched forth the relentless rabble. The vociferation of the infuriated mob shook the palace to its foundations. There was but one that appeared to be calm, in the midst of the vast multitude. It was the Nazarene.

After many fruitless attempts to protect him from this fury of his merciless persecutors, I adopted a measure which, at the moment, appeared to me to be the only one that could save his life. I ordered him to be scourged; then, calling for an ewer, I washed my hands in the presence of the multitude, thereby signifying to them my disapproval of the deed. But in vain. It was his life that those wretches thirsted for!

Often in our civil commotions have I witnessed the furious animosity of the multitude, but nothing could be compared to what I witnessed in the present instance. It might have been truly said that on this occasion all the phantoms of the infernal regions had assembled at Jerusalem. The crowd appeared not to walk: they were borne along, whirling and rolling like living waves, from the portals of the Pretorium, even unto Mount Zion, with howlings, screams, shrieks and vociferations, such as were never heard in the seditions of the Panonia, or in the tumult of the forum.

[illegible] ? [illegible]

By degrees the day darkened like a winter's twilight, such as was witnessed at the death of the great Julius Caesar, which was likewise toward the Ides of March.

I, the continued governor of a rebellious province, was leaning against a column of my palace contemplating through the dreary gloom these fiends of torture dragging to execution the innocent Nazarene. All around me was deserted. Jerusalem had vomited forth her indwellers through the funeral gate that leads to the Gemonica. An air of desolation and sadness enveloped me. My guards had joined the cavalry, and the centurion, to display a shadow of power, was endeavoring to keep order. I was left alone, and my breaking heart admonished me that what was passing at that moment appertained rather to the history of the gods than to that of a man. A loud clamor was heard proceeding from Golgotha, which, borne on the winds, seemed to announce an agony such as had never been heard by mortal ears. Dark clouds lowered over the pinnacle of the Temple, and, settling over the city, covered it as with a veil. So dreadful were the signs that were seen, both in the heavens and on the earth, that Dionysius, the Areopagite, is reported to have exclaimed, "Either the author of nature is suffering, or the universe is falling apart."

Towards the first hour of the night I threw my mantle around me and went down into the city towards the gates of Golgotha. The sacrifice was consummated. The crowd was returning home, still agitated, it is true, but gloomy, taciturn and desperate. What they had witnessed had stricken them with terror and remorse. I also saw my little Roman cohort pass by mournfully, the standard-bearer having veiled his eagle in token of grief, and I overheard some of the soldiers murmuring strange words which I did not understand. Others were recounting prodigies, almost similar to those which had so often smitten the Romans by the will of the gods. Sometimes groups of men and women would halt, then looking back toward Mount Calvary would remain motionless, in expectation of witnessing some new prodigy.

I returned to the Pretorium, sad and pensive. On ascending the stairs—the steps of which were still stained with the blood of the Nazarene—I perceived an old man in a suppliant posture, and behind him several women in tears. He threw himself at my feet and wept bitterly. It is painful to see an old man weep. "Father," said I to him, mildly, "who are you, and what is your request?"

"I am Joseph of Arimathea," replied he, "and am come to beg of you, upon my knees, the permission to bury Jesus of Nazareth."

"Your prayer is granted," said I to him, and at the same time ordered Manlius to take some soldiers with him to superintend the interment, lest it should be interfered with.

A few days after, the sepulchre was found empty. His disciples published all over the country that Jesus had risen from the dead, as he had foretold.

A last duty remained to be performed and that was to communicate to the Emperor these deplorable events. I did so on the night that followed the fatal catastrophe, and had just finished the communication when day began to dawn. At that moment the sound of clarions, playing the air of Diana, struck my ear. Casting my eye towards the Caesarean gate, I beheld a troop of soldiers and heard at a distance other trumpets sounding Caesar's march. It was the reinforcement that had been promised me—two thousand chosen troops who, to hasten their arrival, had marched all night. "It has been decreed by the fates," cried I, wringing my hands "that the great iniquity should be accomplished, that for the purpose of averting the deed of **yesterday**, troops should arrive **today**! Cruel destiny, how thou sportest with the affairs of mortals!" It was but too true, what the Nazarene exclaimed while writhing on the cross: "All is consummated." Z. '92:40-42; 51-53.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

Sheep are very timid animals and need some kind of leading. In the absence of a shepherd, they need some one of their own number to be, as it were, leader for them. In flocks of sheep there are wise sheep—rams of the flock, leaders—that the sheep learn to follow, in the absence of the shepherd. These old rams of the flock would represent Elders in the Church of Christ. The ram's horns constitute a means of defence, with which he could drive off adversaries in a time of attack, and the sheep would be able to get behind him. But the Scriptures speak of danger as respects some of the rams of the flock —certain leaders of the Lord's people. (Ezek. 34:17-23.) These rams got into the stream and made it muddy, defiling the water. . . . This illustration . . . should not be lost upon us. . . . The proper leaders are those who show the proper disposition. The Church is very much at the mercy of the leaders; hence the latter have the greater responsibility. So the Apostle says, Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that a man who is a teacher has the severer trial, the severer test. (Paraphrase of James 3:1, R.V.) He has the greater responsibility in proportion to his ability. It would seem, then, that all who accept the position of Elders are, to some extent, representing the Lord, who is the great Shepherd of the Flock. Z. '14:30.

◆

All the Lord's faithful should be ready for His presence, to render up at any hour their accounts and experience the change. Z. '14:46.

"A little talk with Jesus—
 How it smooths the rugged road!
How it seems to help me onward
 When I faint beneath my load!
When my heart is crushed with sorrow,
 And my eyes with tears are dim,
There is naught can yield me comfort
 Like a little talk with Him.

"The way is sometimes weary
 To yonder nearing clime,
But a little talk with Jesus
 Has helped me many a time.
The more I come to know Him,
 And all His grace explore,
It sets me ever longing
 To know Him more and more."

—Z. '14:9.

◆

As one by one the number beyond the veil increases and the members this side correspondingly decrease the great privilege of being servants of God and being found faithful as such looms larger and larger before our mental vision. We know not which of us will next be called to enter into the joys of our Lord in full, but we trust that all of the truly consecrated are in the waiting attitude, expecting, hoping, longing for the resurrection change, which the Apostle assures us is necessary, because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom" shortly to be established.—1 Cor. 15:50. Z. '16:223.

"MY SOUL, BE ON THY GUARD"

According to the Scriptures, as well as according to our own experience and that of many others of which we have knowledge, all sin which comes in upon a New Creature, comes very insidiously and generally in some soft way. An outward attack, like throwing stones, is never made. One would shut the door promptly against such an attack; but it is the smooth-spoken sins, the smooth-tongued sins, that come in, the sins that appear to be right. . . . The New Creature has no right to allow this. His tongue may speak that which is good and that only. This is an absolute command: "**Speak evil of no man**"—not only of no man in the Church, but of no man outside of the Church; and in this case, the **man** includes the **women**. Z. '10:167.

◆

Let us make this matter of love for the brethren and laying down of our lives for the brethren **a matter of personal study** and of practical application to our own hearts, minds, thoughts, words, actions. And let us pray for one another, as well as exhort one another along these lines, striving to be filled with our Master's Spirit. Z. '16:261.

◆

Let us lay this well to heart. Neglect of God's Word, neglect of His promises, means a deficiency of strength to bear the trial which is our portion. It means also the opening of the door for Satan to put darkness for light and light for darkness, to our confusion. Z. '16:236.

◆

"THE KING IN HIS BEAUTY"

"Thine eyes shall see **the** King! The very same
Whose love shone forth upon the curseful tree,
Who bore thy guilt, who calleth thee by name;
Thine eyes shall see!

"Thine eyes shall see the **King**! The Mighty One,
The Many-crowned, the Light-enrobed; and He
Shall bid thee share the Kingdom He hath won;
Thine **eyes** shall see!

"And **in His beauty!** Stay thee, mortal song,
The 'altogether lovely' One must be
Unspeakable in glory—yet ere long
Thine eyes **shall** see!

"Yes! though the land be 'very far' away,
A step, a moment, ends the toil for thee;
Then changing grief for gladness, night for day,
Thine eyes shall **see**!—Z. '16:165.

◆

All with whom we come in contact should be able to see by our sweetness of spirit, by our patience under provocation, that we have indeed "been with Jesus" and learned of Him.—Acts 4:13. The "peace of God which passeth all understanding" should have such control of each one who would represent the Lord and His Message, that a hallowed influence would go with each, especially in every service rendered and every word spoken in the name of the Prince of Peace. Z. '16:326.

THREE VALUABLE LESSONS

The three great lessons which will be required of those who will be heirs of the Kingdom are: (1) A proper, thorough **appreciation** of **Justice**, and a **manifestation** of that appreciation of justice by an endeavor to comply with the requirements of the Golden Rule—to love our neighbor as ourselves. (2) A further lesson is that of **Love**, sympathy, compassion, mercy. However **exacting** we may be respecting **ourselves**, our own thoughts, words and deeds, we are not to **exact** from others, but be willing to **take** from them whatever they are pleased to **give**—as did our Savior. This will mean (3), suffering with Christ, having **fellowship** in His **sufferings**. It will mean the learning of valuable lessons to fit and qualify us for the work of being kings, priests and judges with our Lord in His coming Kingdom. St. Paul emphasized the importance of having the Christ-character engraved on our hearts when he wrote that God's predestination is that all who will be of the Church in glory must be copies of His dear Son—must have the Epistle of Christ written in their **hearts**. (Romans 8:28-30.) No matter how imperfect their **bodies**, **how** imperfect their **attainment of their ideals**, those ideals must be **according to the Divine standard**. And they must be so in sympathy with those ideals as to be glad to **suffer** for their **attainment**. Z. '16:302.

◆

We still have the motions of sin in our bodies, the tendencies toward sin, which have become almost second nature to us, through the long period of nearly six thousand years of slavery. So that while we are now free, and with the mind are serving the law of Christ, and are accepted into his army as soldiers of the cross, to battle for righteousness and truth and goodness and purity, we nevertheless find our new selves harrassed by the old perverted tastes and inclinations of our own flesh, toward the service of the old taskmaster. Not the least of our fightings, therefore, as new creatures in Christ Jesus, is against these perverted tendencies of our flesh, and the battle with these is a daily battle. With the Apostle Paul, one of the great soldiers in our war, we should be able to say, "I keep my body (my flesh and its desires) under (in subjection to my new will, my new self) lest after having preached to others I myself should be a castaway." 1 Cor. 9:27. Z. '98:154.

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In this eventful period everything that can be shaken will be shaken, that only the unshakable things of truth and righteousness may remain. (Hebrews 12:25-29.) Every one called to share in the coming Kingdom must be a lover of righteousness, one who will courageously and **lovingly STAND for the Truth however much it may be spoken against**. All others will be shaken out of this company. The snares and delusions of this "evil day" are accomplishing this very work. **In the end only the true will remain.** "Seeing that we look for these things (let us) be diligent, that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14), ready for the entrance into that rest which yet remains. Z. '16:341.

Helpful Thoughts From The Volumes

The Lord's selection of the Church, during this time when evil prevails, is to the intent that surrounding circumstances may prove the measure of the love and loyalty of each to him and his. If our love be cool, the claims of the world, the flesh and the Adversary will be too much for us, and attract our time, our influence, our money. On the other hand, in proportion as our love for the Lord is strong and warm, in that same proportion we will delight to sacrifice these to him; not only to give our surplus of energy and influence and means, laying these down as we find opportunity in the service of the brethren, **but additionally,** this spirit of devotion to the Lord will prompt us to curtail within reasonable, economical limits the demands of the home and family, and **especially of self,** that we may have the more to sacrifice upon the Lord's altar. As our Lord was for three and a half years breaking His body, and for three and a half years giving his blood, his life, and only finished these sacrifices at Calvary, so with us; the laying down of our lives for the brethren is in small affairs of service, either temporal or spiritual, the spiritual being the higher, and hence the more important, though he who would shut up his compassion toward a brother having temporal need would give evidence that he did not have the Spirit of the Lord ruling in his heart in any proper degree. F: 469.

◆

We require testings in love after we have reached the mark; and our exercises while at the mark—striving to maintain in our lives that mark, or standard—will be very strengthening to our characters. In this, especially, our experiences will correspond to those of our Lord; for while he did not need to run to attain the mark, he did need to fight a good fight of faith **at the mark,**—not to be turned from it, not to be overcome by the various besetments of the world and the Adversary. "I press down upon the mark," says the Apostle; and so must each of us **hold fast** that mark after we do attain it. F. 190.

◆

TS:4:1

The Scriptures recognize a oneness or relationship of these living stones during the period of their preparation. Indeed, they go a step further, and recognize a **temporary organization** which permits each member of the prospective Kingdom to be a sharer with the great Teacher and Master Builder in the preparatory work of "building up one another in the most holy faith." F. 196.

◆

The people of the Lord can escape from his (the Adversary's) machinations only in proportion as their hearts are thoroughly loyal to the Lord and attentive to his Word,—and then because to such he will grant special assistance and deliverance from evil, which, if it were not for this assistance, would deceive the very elect. F. 626.

Christ had great love for us, else he would not have redeemed us. His every dealing has been loving and we should not allow anything to separate us from that love. If tribulations come, we should permit them only to drive us nearer the Lord as the one who alone can succor us. If distress or persecution or famine or destitution or any peril should come upon us,—should we on account of fear of these cease our love for the Lord, renounce his name and his cause and follow no longer in his footsteps, choosing rather some easier course in life? F. 184.

◆

There will surely not be an unsympathetic member of the entire body of Christ. All will have been touched with experiences, and know fully how to sympathize with the poor world when the time shall come for their restitution by judgments. "F.," page 645.

◆

"As astonished at thee have been many (so marred by man was his appearance, and his form by the sons of men) so shall he astonish many peoples." As the people of his day were surprised that he would submit to the abuses of those who crowned him with thorns and smote him and spat upon him and crucified and pierced him, so others of all nations, now and in the future, hearing of the endurance of "such contradiction of sinners against himself" (Heb. 12: 3) have wondered and will wonder at such patience and such meekness. "Before him shall kings shut their mouths; for what was not recorded (of others) they will see (exemplified in Him); what they had never before heard of they shall understand." The great ones of earth never heard of any king voluntarily submitting to such indignities at the hands of his subjects, and in order that he might do them good. Verily, "His is love beyond a brother's." No wonder if all are astonished "in due time." "E.," page 159.

◆

The Holy Spirit has triumphed in both the objects for which it was sent. It HAS selected a faithful "little flock" of "overcomers," followers of the way of righteousness—Jesus the Captain and his faithful band of soldiers of the cross, all of whom consecrated "even unto death"; and to whom the Kingdom reward will soon be given—when the last members have been fully tested and made perfect through sufferings for righteousness' sake. It HAS also triumphed in respect to **witnessing** to the world. Our Lord foretold that the effect of the witnessing would be to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of a coming day of righteous judgment, in which evil deeds of the present life will have a just retribution, according to the degree of light enjoyed by the transgressor. This witness HAS gone far and near, and today the world as a whole recognizes these three items which the Spirit of holiness in the Church has set before it—sin, righteousness and judgment. "E.," pages 191-192.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER THIRTY-TWO

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"THY PEOPLE SHALL BY MY PEOPLE"

Ruth 1: 16-22.

SOMEWHERE about Gideon's time, when scarcity amounting almost to famine prevailed in Palestine, as a judgment of the Lord upon his people for some measure of coldness or unfaithfulness to him and to their covenant, Naomi's husband determined to emigrate with his family to the other side of the Dead Sea,—to the land of Moab. The Moabites were the descendants of Lot, but, nevertheless, the Lord marked out to his people Israel that they were not to be considered the children of Abraham—that they were not fellow-heirs of the promises made to Abraham, and, therefore, they were not subjects of special dealings, disciplines, providences, etc., as were the Israelites. Naomi and her two sons went with her husband apparently without regret, to the land of Moab, hoping thereby to better the prospects of the family. It was a mistake, however, as she afterwards realized, to attempt to regulate their own affairs when they were especially under the Lord's protection and guidance.

As Israelites they should have esteemed the divine promises so highly that they would not have left the land of promise and the people of promise to commingle with those who were strangers to those promises and more or less idolaters. To be on the Lord's side amongst the Lord's people should have been esteemed far more important than earthly prospects. Naomi, however, is not to blame in connection with this matter; the responsibility rested with her husband, and it is evident that her heart was never fully in sympathy with the move, because about ten years subsequently, when her husband and two sons died, she promptly determined on a return to the Lord's people and to the land which he had given them.

Human nature is much the same everywhere and always. How many there are today who mistakenly seek to map out their plans for the present life in disregard of their highest interests, in disregard of the Lord's promises and the relationship which they have entered into by covenant with him! How many there are who forget that the Lord's arrangement with all of his covenant people is that he will supervise their affairs and cause all things to work together for good to them! Instead of making temporal interests the chief concern, Naomi's husband should have been making the religious interests of himself and family his chief concern, so that if he had been living in Moab under greater prosperity, he should rather have been willing to go into the land of promise amongst the Lord's people, though such a course would seem to mean a blighting of some of his earthly interests.

The Lord's people of Spiritual Israel will do well to bear this thought continually in mind—that spiritual interests are to be given the preference always; that temporal affairs are to be managed and controlled from the standpoint of the everlasting welfare;—from the standpoint of spiritual growth and development and prosperity;—from the standpoint of the best interests and influences upon their children. **They should not only hesitate to follow any suggestion that would take themselves and their families into unfavorable, godless surroundings, but they should determine that not under any consideration would they follow such a suggestion;**—that on the contrary the Lord's people should be their people, even though this meant less of the comforts and luxuries of this present life: it would surely mean greater spiritual blessings and favors for the present time, and persevering would mean the gaining of the glorious reward which our Lord has promised to the faithful who love him more than they love houses and lands and kindred, etc.

—Z. '02: 349-350.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The Convention of Standfast Bible Students assembled at Vancouver, B.C., March 26, 27 and 28, voted unanimously that the general office work and the work of compiling and publishing the OLD CORN GEMS be consolidated at Victoria, B.C.

Please note, therefore, that in future all communications and donations should be sent to STANDFAST BIBLE STUDENTS, P.O. BOX 7, VICTORIA, B.C.

GENERAL CONVENTION

General Convention of STANDFAST BIBLE STUDENTS at I.O.O.F. Hall, Douglas Street, Victoria, B.C., Saturday, Sunday and Monday, May 22nd, 23rd and 24th, 1920. Two meals will be provided daily for all conventioners by the local Ecclesia. Reception Committee will meet boats and trains. For further information please write Brother J. H. Bartlett, P.O. Box 7, Victoria, B.C.

The course of God's people at all times should be that marked out by the Master—full resignation to the will of God—full realization of God's supervision of all the interests of His Cause—and full trust that the results will work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.—Z. '14: 333.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER THIRTY-TWO

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18: 51.

"Obedience Better Than Sacrifice"

1 Sam. 15: 1-35.

Golden Text:—"The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."—Josh. 24: 24.

OUR lesson tells of the testing of King Saul, of his failure to stand the tests, and of the consequent rejection of his family and himself from the kingdom. His history may be divided into four parts: (1) The favorable opportunities of his youth—energetic, fine looking, modest, his choice as the king of Israel was generally conceded to be an excellent one. (2) In the earlier years of his reign he was a successful general and an able organizer of his kingdom. (3) In his testing time he failed and was rejected, partially at first, more thoroughly subsequently. (4) The decline of his manhood, his almost loss of reason, and finally the tragic death of himself and his sons. Today's lesson deals specially with the third of these epochs—his testing.

The Philistines exercised a kind of overlordship in Palestine, presumably collecting taxes as the consideration for permitting the people to have a measure of peace and possession of the country. Apparently they had fortified cities in various parts of Israel's territory, and from their representatives in these the word came that the Israelites had anointed Saul to be their king, a circumstance which was understood to imply the throwing off of the Philistine yoke, a declaration of independence. At once the Philistines assembled an army wherewith to overthrow the new kingdom. The record that they had thirty thousand chariots is supposed to have been a copyist's error for three thousand; for the number of horsemen, two to each chariot, is given as six thousand. This considerable army marched into Palestine; and a battle ensued between them and the Israelites. King Saul evidently desired to be in harmony with the Lord, and realized still that without divine interposition he would be powerless to repel an invader of such strength. The prophet Samuel was communicated with, and he promised to come within seven days to offer sacrifice to God on Israel's behalf, that the Lord's blessing might attend his people and bring them the victory, in harmony with the divine covenant.

King Saul waited for six days, and meantime saw his army melting from desertion, for the Israelites were poorly armed and greatly in fear. They had practically no weapons, merely their agricultural implements for weapons of war. Apparently the Philistines had previously deprived them of fighting weapons, and in some manner had hindered the Kenites, who were the smiths of the time, from serving them in the manufacture of swords and spears. When the seventh day had come, King Saul, wearied of waiting for Samuel, offered the sacrifice himself, contrary to the divine order. Immediately Samuel appeared, and, pointing out to Saul his failure, stated that obedience to God would have been more appreciated by the Almighty than were the sacrifices. Samuel also pointed out that the sacrifice under the circumstances was a sin, and that the result of this disobedience was that God would not permit Saul and his kingdom to be perpetuated, though he promised that the battle immediately before them would be successful for Israel's sake and for the furtherance of God's own cause.

The difficulty was Saul's failure to respect the divine arrangement, his presumption in undertaking to do what had not been committed to his care, but was under the charge of another. **The Lord's cause was not hindered; but King Saul's own prosperity was interfered with by his neglect of the divine arrangement.**

The Lesson for Spiritual Israelites

What lesson may we draw from this incident? If for the moment we think of Saul as representing those who have been favored of God, and called to joint-heirship with Jesus in his Kingdom and anointed with the holy Spirit, we may see in his early victories a picture of our good beginning, when we trusted God implicitly, and sought to do merely as he directed, and to wait patiently and trustfully for him to guide in all of our affairs. As Saul should have made progress and become stronger in his faith and patience and obedience, so should our earliest experiences as the Lord's servants bring to us increasing patience, perseverance, faith, confidence, implicit obedience. But as this was not the case with King Saul, so it is not the case with many of those who have been anointed for joint-heirship with the Lord in his Kingdom. Many of these have similar experiences to that of Saul. Instead of their growing more dependent upon the Lord, the favors received at his hand make them less particular to know and to do his will. They still reverence the Lord; they still recognize that without him they could do nothing; but **they are not sufficiently careful to note just what he would have them to do.** Sometimes they undertake to do the work of others, and to that extent are "busybodies in other men's matters," as King Saul busybodied and sinned in attempting to do the work that belonged to the prophet.

We should see that in the divine mind obedience is one of the most important elements of character. The Lord has us in training in the school of Christ for a great work in the future; and the first prerequisite for future honors and opportunities very properly must be our obedience to the opportunities and directions of the Lord in the present time. This our Lord explained clearly in his parables, saying that to some of his servants he had entrusted more talents than to others; that each would be called upon to give an account for the proper exercise of the talents, responsibilities and commands that had been put upon him, and that each would be rewarded in proportion as he used the talents given to him. Our Lord's expression on the subject is, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."—Luke 16:10.

Here, then, is our lesson, "Obedience is better than sacrifice" in God's sight. He will not either approve or reward carelessness on our part in this matter. On the contrary, inattention to his direct will would mark us as proportionately unfit for his direct service, either here or hereafter. This implies on our part such a loyalty to the Lord, such a carefulness in respect to his service, such a recognition of each other in respect to the Lord and his service, that we would go about very carefully in our endeavors to serve his cause. So the Apostle exhorts, "Let us walk circumspectly," carefully, scrutinizingly.—Eph. 5:15.

As the mariner guides the course of his ship by certain charts which show hidden rocks and shoals, and by the stars in their courses, so the Christian is furnished with a chart which shows him the course which he should pursue, and the things which would be displeasing to God and injurious to himself. That chart is the Bible, and whoever would be in harmony with God must not only hearken for his message but keep track also of the hidden dangers which beset his course. Each one of us is on trial. The Lord himself is scrutinizing the course we are taking. It is not sufficient to him that we shall have zeal. The zeal which he will approve is that which operates from love and along the lines of his instruction. **The zeal which disregards the divine instruction is not approved; it leads to shipwreck.**

The Apostle gives some suggestions along this line, saying that every member of the Body of Christ is necessary (1 Cor. 12:12-26); none is to be despised or hindered from having his part in the general work of building up the Body in the most holy faith. The Apostle illustrates that the eye cannot say to the hand or the foot, "I have no need of you;" and contrariwise the hand or the foot cannot say that it has no need of the eye nor of the ear. Every member is necessary; and above all every member of the Body is to move only in accord with the will of the Head. And that will is to be sought for in every incident of life, great or small. We are not to think of the Lord's cause as being wholly dependent upon us. We are to remember the mistake which Uzzah made—When he saw the ark of the Lord jostled in the road, he put forth his hand to steady it, and died because of his disobedience. It was not in his province to steady the ark. The Lord had that matter under his own supervision, and only the priest might even touch it. Let us all then be zealous, not only to serve the Lord, but also to know the way in which he would have us render that service. Let us be sure that service rendered in any other way than as divinely directed will not be acceptable and will not bring blessing upon us, but on the contrary bring us the Lord's proportionate disfavor. Obedience is better than sacrifice.

The Slaughter of the Amalekites

Evidently quite a number of years intervened between the incidents to which we have just referred and those which constitute the main part of today's lesson—King Saul's second test. In the interim Israel had grown strong as a nation; and the time had come for the carrying out of a divine declaration made long before; namely, that the Amalekites should be utterly destroyed. As one branch of Esau's family, they were related to the Israelites and to the Arabs of today. Like the latter they were horsemen, and a kind of brigand, who flourished by pillaging their neighbors. Not strong enough themselves to injure the Israelites they associated themselves with others of the enemies of Israel, either directly participating in war or indirectly, following after battles to gather up the spoils. It will be remembered that they fought against the Israelites in the wilderness when on their way toward Canaan. (Exod. 17:8-16.) It will be remembered also that they again opposed the Israelites in conquering the land of promise; and that the Lord had declared through Moses that these should be utterly destroyed, and had given Israel this command.—Deut. 25:17-19.

The fulfilling of these commands was deferred, probably for two reasons. First, the Israelites had no cavalry and would have found it difficult to cope with these marauders, who would swoop down upon them and be off. Secondly, it is probable that the Lord permitted the Amalekites to continue as a thorn in the side of the Israelites for their chastening. But now in Samuel's day the message came to King Saul to destroy utterly the Amalekites, not only all the people, great and small, but all of their belongings—sheep, cattle, horses—everything. The Israelites were to do this as the sword of the Lord, as inflicting the judgment which God had decreed. It must not be said of them that they had turned brigands and thieves, to war against their neighbors and to profit by their pelf. This must be a witness not only to the nations round about, but to the Israelites themselves; it must be a lesson. They must not get the impression that warfare against their neighbors would be undertaken for any selfish, mercenary motives. They were God's scourge in this instance. We are not to draw the inference that today God gives any command to any nation to blot out another people. We are to remember, on the contrary, that Israel was a picture-nation, a type nation; and that through their experience and history the Lord dealt peculiarly to illustrate principles; that he used Israel as his sword, as his pen, as his mouthpiece. . . .

King Saul's Second Test

That a good many years had passed, and that King Saul had made good use of his opportunities as an organizer of the Kingdom, is evidenced by the fact that a large army was assembled in harmony with the Lord's command to the prophet: "Two hundred thousand footmen and ten thousand men of Judah." This army was evidently so disposed of as to intercept any of the Amalekites who might flee. Meantime word was sent to the Kenites, who dwelt amongst the Amalekites, advising them to leave that they might not suffer in the punishment of the Amalekites; and the explanation made was that as the Kenites had favored the Lord's people, they were spared in recognition of this fact; for the destruction of the Amalekites was in harmony with the divine decree, because of their opposition to Israel.

The people were all slaughtered except the king, whom King Saul spared, keeping him as a kind of trophy. The animals also were all destroyed, except the choicest of the flocks and herds, which additionally was contrary to the divine command.

When the prophet Samuel came to the king, the latter saluted him as God's representative and reported that he had done according to the divine command. Then came the inquiry, "If so, what means the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle?" Saul's answer was probably a prevarication; that these were kept in order to be offered to the Lord in sacrifice. Then Samuel reproved him, pointing out that he had violated the command of the Lord in preserving any of them. The king, however, protested that the people had kept them; that Israel had desired them; and we can readily suppose that there would have been amongst the Israelites quite an opposition to the waste of the good things of the Amalekites, so accustomed were people of that time, as well as of today, to desire valuables. Saul might have indeed complied with the divine decree by rendering obedience to the Lord and thus put himself in disfavor with the people; but he would have maintained the divine approval thereby. As it was, the prophet expressed the divine disapproval, saying, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken (better) than the fat of rams."

Tests of the Royal Priesthood

Let us see if there are not corresponding tests upon the royal priesthood. Frequently tests come to this class after they have been a long while in the school of Christ. Speaking to some such, the Apostle says, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers ye have need that one teach you again what be the first principles of the oracles of God," the doctrines (teachings) of Christ. (Heb. 5:12.) We are sometimes surprised at others, sometimes at ourselves, that we have been so slow in making progress; that we have apparently gained so little victory in character building and appreciation of the principles which should govern amongst those who are the Lord's anointed and in preparation for the throne. Saul's difficulty and tests may represent some of ours.

(1) A selfish spirit, a desire for some of the best of the things which the Lord has condemned; a willingness to spare these because they appeal to us from a selfish viewpoint, the fleshly viewpoint.

(2) A man-fearing spirit. As Saul feared to bring upon himself the reproaches of the people, fearing to be thought too narrow on the one hand and too wasteful on the other, so a temptation comes to the Lord's people to guide their course not entirely by the Word of the Lord, but with a deference to the sentiments of others. This is the fear of man that brings a snare. (Prov. 29:25.) We are ensnared by the spirit of the world. Of such the Lord says, "How can ye believe [continue in proper discipleship] which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"—John 5:44.

(3) Saul's third difficulty was that he had too slack an appreciation of the Lord's Word; and this is the difficulty which specially besets nearly every one of the Lord's followers who stray away into error of doctrine or of conduct. With what care ought we to guard ourselves, lest having become partakers of so great a blessing as our anointing implies, any of us should seem to come short of its glorious realization in the Kingdom. Let us see to it that we put away all love of sin in its every form, and that we esteem the Lord's favor so highly that the consideration of human friendships would not have a particle of weight or influence with us, except as the same should be in full accord with the divine programme; and in order to the maintenance of these proper relationships, let us take heed to his Word.

Let us remember the Apostle's words that we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in high positions. (Eph. 6:12.) Let us remember that these wicked spirits have the power in some degree to favor in us wrong sentiments; that in proportion as we would give our minds into any selfish, sinful or ignoble channel, in that same proportion these unseen adversaries of the saints would have power over them. Let us remember, on the contrary, that **in proportion as our hearts are loyal to the Lord and his Word and to the spirit of the truth, the spirit of love, in that same proportion we are surrounded by a halo of influence which would protect us, so that of such it may be written, "The wicked one toucheth him not."—John 5:18.**

The Test of Perfect Love

The Scriptures clearly indicate a great trial and testing for the Church. It will determine with very many what Saul's testing determined for him, whether or not God's favor will continue, with its Kingdom privileges and opportunities. To the faithful the Lord says, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." The others will be answered as was Saul, "Obedience is better than sacrifice;" thou art rejected. Through the Revelator the Lord tells us how the Philadelphian stage of the Church would be saved from the great "hour of trial that is come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." (Rev. 3:10.) There are trials upon the Laodicean Church, living at the time of the presence of the Son of Man, when he stands at the door and knocks. (Rev. 3:20.) In that trial, we are told, that a thousand shall fall at the side and ten thousand at the right hand of the one Body, the true Church, of which Jesus is the Head. The Apostle Peter, in figurative language, describes the heavens as being on fire (2 Pet. 3:12), symbolically picturing the ecclesiastical influence of our day; and St. Paul tells of the "fire that shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (1 Cor. 3:13.) We are assured that only the gold, silver and precious stones of the divine character and doctrine will abide the fiery ordeal. Surely none of the Lord's people can afford to ignore such testings as these; particularly none of those who with us believe that we are now in that trial period.

If the test of character approved of God, is love—perfect love for God, for the brethren, yea, also for our enemies—then let that thought be continually before all of our minds to the intent that we be not overtaken, that we be not deceived by the great Adversary, who still would fain put darkness for light and light for darkness, on this as upon every other subject. Our anticipation is that the great conflict which will ultimately reach (which has reached) the world, and eventuate in the anarchy which will overthrow all law and order, will begin with the Church; begin with the consecrated, the sanctified, the enlightened. Does not the Lord forewarn us, that in all things judgment must begin at the house of God. (1 Pet. 4:17.) **Necessarily it must begin with those who are highest up in that house as respects light, knowledge and privileges.**

Are we prepared for these tests, of which we read that they would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect? We still believe that these tests will be along the lines of perfect love. Love and selfishness are the two great powers that are moving the world and each individual therein. We have already seen that the selfishness, which will overwhelm the world shortly, will mean lovelessness to the extent that the Scriptures declare, "Every man's hand shall be against his neighbor, and no peace to him that goeth out nor to him that cometh in." (Zech. 8:10; 11:6.) Is that same condition of things to be expected in the Church—every man's hand against his neighbor, the tongue of every brother against every other brother in the Lord? Are anger, malice, hatred, envy and strife to be permitted to overwhelm the Church of Christ? Could such things have any place or power of influence against those who have knowledge of truth? **We are of the opinion that this is just what we are to expect.**

We are in the habit of supposing that our Lord's words, "Brother shall deliver up brother to death," applied merely to our Lord's time and during the dark ages. Do we forget that similar conditions may be expected in the end of this age? The delivering up may not be physical, however; the crucifying, the scourging and the roasting may not be literal; but we believe that very much the same things may be expected with only such limits as our civilization will compel. Aparently it is not enough of a test to us to be "hated of all men for my name's sake." We must be tested by the hatred, the malice, the evil speaking and evil surmising of those who dipped with us in the dish, of those who partook with us of the present things of divine bounty at the table of the Lord, the spiritual food. Ah! If this be so then we may indeed expect for the closing days of the Church, the Body of Christ, experiences not dissimilar to those which came to the Master in Gethsemane, one of the most trying of which must have been the Judas kiss.

Brethren, What Shall We Do?

When some of those who heard the Apostles on Pentecost day came to an understanding of what was the real situation of affairs, and that they and their rulers had crucified the Prince of Life—some of them actually and some of them by failing to protest—those who were right-minded were cut to the heart and cried out, "What must we do?" The Apostle assured them of forgiveness because they did it ignorantly. And so with us. If any of us find that under any snare, or delusion of the Adversary, we have been entrapped into wrongdoing toward a brother, we should immediately feel cut to the heart, and should go to the Lord for divine forgiveness and to those whom we have wronged, for their part of it, that thus we might turn defeat in the hands of the Adversary to victory.

Undoubtedly just such a storm is coming; and as the prophet expresses it, the question is not, Who shall fall, but **"Who shall be able to stand?"** (Mal. 3:2.) A thousand shall fall to one who will stand. The very Elect will not be deceived, but the question is, **Are we of the very Elect? and our answer must be that the Lord will decide this matter according to the manner in which we decide when under the test.** It is impossible for us to surmise what may be the various apparent grounds for unbrotherliness, for the loss of a brother's love. If we give heed to the Adversary, he will make us think it proper to break away from the regular rule of procedure, and, if we are willing, make us to feel that we are fully justified in violating all the various directions which the Lord our God has given us. It will require of all of us loving faithfulness to the Lord and to the brethren to enable us to withstand the trials of this day; and we cannot at this point refrain from reminding the dear followers of the

Lord afresh of what we have already amplified in Dawn-Studies, Vol. VI., Chap. 9, the course which the new creature should take in every matter in which he feels that a brother has offended him, outlined by our Lord in Matt. 18: 15-17.

Let us be sure that the Adversary will use every means to turn us aside from this plainly stated rule of love; that he will endeavor to make us think that it cannot be applicable to the difficulty which troubles us. Let our answer to all such suggestions of Satan be, "Get thee behind me." We write thus pointedly, because we have intimations from the brethren of misunderstandings and in some instances the manifestation of a loveless spirit, a hypercritical spirit, an unbrotherly spirit, a spirit in direct opposition to the Golden Rule and to the Lord's instructions, to go to him alone, to seek to win thy brother, and not to cast him off nor excommunicate him. On the contrary,be ready to die for him. "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren."—1 John 3: 16.

Let us remember, also, that this loveless condition of the heart, this hypercritical spirit, does not come in suddenly; it developes gradually. Hence every day each of the Lord's people should have a searching of his heart to see whether or not he can find there toward anybody, saint or sinner, any of the spirit of malice which the Lord figuratively represented as leaven, contaminating in its influence. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (1 Cor. 5: 6.) A little envy, a little malice, a little anger, a little hatred, and a little strife, may leaven our hearts completely, and in a comparatively short time turn the sweets of our new nature, the spirit of love, into acid bitterness. Moreover, the leaven is not likely to be confined to one, but spreads to others; and thus many may be defiled. The poet has said:—

"We are not worst at once;
The course of evil begins so slowly, and from such slight sources,
An infant's hand might stem its breach with clay;
But let the stream get deeper, and philosophy,
Ah! and religion, too, shall strive in vain
To turn the headlong current."—Z. '08: 214-218.

Relative Values of the Heavenly and Earthly Treasures

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."—Luke 12: 15.

THIS statement of our Lord reminds us also of the exhortation of the Apostle Paul, "Let us lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus." All that the Lord's people have and are should be consecrated to their most efficient use in the divine service, according to their understanding of the teaching of God's Word. As we reflect upon it, how manifest it becomes that all earthly riches which are not consecrated to God are only weights and hindrances to the Christian. And not only so: it is not enough that our all be **consecrated** to God as an acceptable sacrifice; for if all be consecrated to sacrifice, and yet **never subjected to the flames of the altar,** of what avail is it, except as a broken vow to rise up against us in judgment?

Many, indeed, are foolish enough to think that abundance of possessions is the only thing worth living for; and when they are obtained they put their trust in these uncertain riches and forget God. Their time and attention are all engrossed and their interest absorbed in the accumulation and care of the earthly treasures, which shut out all nobler aspirations toward spiritual things. It is for this reason that the Lord cautions his people not to be overcharged with the cares of this life. It is right to be charged to the extent of our necessities, and also to the extent of the responsibilities of our stewardship in the Lord's service, to be provident and thoughtful, not only for ourselves, but also for others whom it may be in our power to assist; but to be charged is one thing, to be **overcharged** is quite another. To be **overcharged** is to permit corroding care, and anxious solicitude to absorb our thought, our time, our interest, and so crowd out spiritual interests and spiritual aspirations.

In the discourse from which the above text is selected, our Lord was endeavoring to give to his disciples that ground of confidence in God which would enable them to cast all their care upon him, knowing that he careth for his children as a wise and loving parent, and that his tender mercies are over all his works. He drew illustrations from the sparrows, the ravens, the lilies of the field and the grass, showing that God had not forgotten nor failed in his care of even these comparatively insignificant things, then adding, How much more will he clothe and feed you, who are of more value than many sparrows. The very hairs of your head are all numbered, so minute is his knowledge of you. Do not be anxious about what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, or wherewithal you shall be clothed; for your Father knoweth that you have need of these things. Seek the Kingdom of God **and his righteousness,** and all these things shall be added [supplied as needed] unto you. . . . For "no **good** thing will the Lord withhold from them that walk uprightly."

What a blessed promise that is! Not only will he make all, even the adverse things, work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to his purpose, but he will not withhold any really good thing from us. Can we fully appreciate this tender, loving solicitude and watchful care for us personally? Can we understand how it takes cognizance of every interest, temporal and spiritual, and how, with wise and loving forethought, it maps out our present course and guides our steps in view of those eternal interests which at present we cannot fully comprehend? Perhaps we cannot fully do so all at once; but let us take it into consideration, praying for a clearer vision of the love of God, and by and by the blessedness of these promises will dawn upon us more and more: and we will begin to realize more fully than ever before that, having placed our all upon the altar of sacrifice, subject to the consuming flames of the altar, we thenceforth belong to that blessed "little flock" to whom our Lord addresses these comforting teachings, and whom he exhorts to loving, patient faith, saying, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Truly, those who follow the Lord's leading in this narrow way of sacrifice and of faith are only a little flock; for only a few thus apply their hearts unto instruction and wholly follow the divine direction. Consequently, only a few know the blessedness of the realization of the Lord's tender care. But to those who follow this leading there is a growing sense of his love which the daily walk with him deepens, confirms and sweetens as the years go by, and as experience makes plain the guidance of his loving hand. As one after another of the trials of life come, and we mark his overruling power, which caused even the adverse elements to work together for our good, faith takes deeper root and the character becomes more stable, sturdy and pleasing to God.

It is for this very purpose that the Lord permits us to be subject to the various vicissitudes of the present life, and that those who belong to the Kingdom of heaven suffer violence at the hands of an unfriendly world. There are lessons of immense value to be learned in this hard school of experience —lessons of faith, of fortitude, of heroism, of courage, of endurance, of meekness, of patience, of sympathy for the suffering, and of loving helpfulness to others. There are works of grace to be wrought out in us which only the hard experiences of life can accomplish. For instance, we would be inclined to lean too much to our own understanding, if we were not at times brought face to face with problems that baffle our skill. It is when we are "afraid to touch things that involve so much," that in our perplexity we come to him who has kindly said, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee," and ask him to undertake for us. Or we might be inclined to trust too much in the arm of flesh, if the arm of flesh had never failed us, and the disappointment driven us to the Lord to seek the shelter of his wing. Or we might learn to trust in uncertain riches, if moth and rust had never corrupted nor thieves stolen the little or much of our earthly possessions. Or we might have been satisfied with earthly friendships and earthly loves, had not their loss sometimes left us alone with God to prove the sweetness of his consolation. Or we might be weak and imbecile, had not the storms of life swept over us and the very emergencies of our case nerved us to courage, endurance and Christian fortitude. In view of all these necessities to the development of character, the Christian can truly feel that whatever the Lord permits to come upon him will be made to work together for his good; and in this confidence he can peacefully sing,—

"If on a quiet sea toward home I calmly sail,
With grateful heart, O God, to thee, I'll own the
favoring gale.

"But should the surges rise, and rest delay to come,
Blest be the tempest, kind the storm, which drives
me nearer home."

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose in view of the Lord's promised care over all our interests, that he would in every case make things work together for our temporal advantage. There was at least one in the company to whom our Lord was speaking who seemed to interpret him thus, and who therefore requested his interposition on his behalf in the matter of an inheritance, saying, "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me."

In reply to this request Jesus said, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" and then followed the instructions concerning the superior value of the heavenly treasure, showing that the earthly things are not worth the strife to obtain them. Jesus had not yet come to judge the world, but referring to that time when he would be the divinely appointed Judge of all the earth, he showed that the searching scrutiny of that judgment would extend to all the minutiae of human affairs. Every selfish act, every injustice, every unkindness, every wrong thing, will then,—but not now, except in very few instances,—receive its just recompense of reward. "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. . . . Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."

Men and women in their present selfish condition of mind and heart, and intoxicated with the spirit of the world, although thus forewarned, do not consider with what shame and confusion of face they will one day have to meet the record of the past, when the little mean acts which they supposed none they cared for knew of, and the unkind words to the defenseless which they thought no one else would ever know all rise up to bear testimony against them. Such often overlook their own folly, and consider that the penalties will fall only upon the criminal class. But the Lord's judgment will be discriminating and exact; "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing; whether it be good or whether it be evil;" and "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

In view of this judgment to come, when the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall be established in his Kingdom, Paul says to all of the Lord's people who realize oppression or injustice or unkindness of any kind,—"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. . . . Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

No, Jesus is not the Judge or divider of the earthly things now: that will be the work of the Millennium; and so far as the earthly things are concerned now, his people may suffer many injustices and difficulties of various kinds; but the Lord's counsel is to dismiss all anxious care concerning them, and, having food and raiment, to be contented, and wait for the great reward of patient endurance.

Meanwhile, let Christians see to it that they are rightly exercised by all the disciplinary experiences of the present time; let them learn the lessons of trust in God and all the other valuable lessons so necessary to fit them for the exalted position to which they are called; let them rejoice in the present favor and communion with God which is the privilege of all the saints, and, with steadfast faith, look forward to the rest that remaineth for his tried and disciplined people.

Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, and let your heart be there. Then disappointments, ingratitude and all the vexing trials of the present life which go to make up the daily cross can be borne with a comparatively easy grace. Your life consisteth not in the abundance of the things you possess: you, beloved, are not dependent upon these earthly things; the Lord is the portion of your inheritance; yea, you have a goodly heritage. (Psa. 16:5, 6.) "Fear not, little flock"—fear not to carry out your consecration to the full, keeping your little all upon the altar of sacrifice, and subject to the consuming fire, trusting all of your future, both for the present life and that which is to come, to the loving care of your covenant-keeping God; and, by and by, in the glory of the Kingdom, you shall prove the superior value of the heavenly treasures when the victory of faith shall be fully realized. Praise the Lord for his abundant grace and his precious promises!—Z. '97: 98-100.

Acceptable to God

"Let the words of my mouth and the mediation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer."—Psa. 19: 14.

HOW beautiful in the sight of right-thinking men is a well balanced, self-possessed and disciplined character; and in contrast with such, how unlovely are the undisciplined and ungoverned—the selfish, the unjust, the unkind and the violent-tempered. Naturally, the one awakens in us emotions of pleasure and admiration, and the other, of pain. And if such is the appreciation of virtue and the abhorrence of the lack of it among men who have lost much of the original image of God, with what a keen appreciation must they be observed by a pure and holy God.

Men of the world, who have no personal acquaintance with God, have no special thought as to how they appear in his sight; but with what carefulness should those who love him and who value his approval study to conform their conduct to his pure and holy mind. True, all the justified and consecrated, notwithstanding their imperfections and short-comings through inherited weaknesses, are acceptable to God through Christ, whose robe of righteousness amply covers us; but the measure of our acceptableness to God, even through Christ, is only to the extent that, while availing ourselves of his imputed righteousness, we are earnestly striving to attain actually to the standard of perfection. By so doing we manifest our actual appreciation of the divine favor. With what confusion and chagrin would one be covered who, in the midst of a fit of violent temper, or an unjust or mean transaction unworthy of his dignity or his profession, should be suddenly surprised by the unexpected appearance of a beloved friend of high and noble character. And yet the eye of such a one is ever upon us. **And only to the extent that we dismiss this thought from our minds, or else that we undervalue the Lord's opinion and approval, can we allow the evil propensities of the fallen nature to run riot.**

Realizing the downward tendency of the old nature, how constantly should the above prayer of the Psalmist be in the minds of God's consecrated children. But how, one inquires, may the difficult task of subduing the inherent depravity be accomplished? It is hard for one, particularly under exasperating circumstances, to control a hasty or violent temper, for another to bridle a gossiping tongue; and especially when the trials of life have put their colored glasses on the eyes and slightly soured the disposition. It is hard for another to be strictly just in his dealings with his fellow-men. And then what a host of inherent weaknesses there are, which every one realizes and knows that he must strive against, if he would be acceptable with God. The thoughts of our hearts are not manifest to fellow-men until we express them in words or actions; but even the very thoughts and intents of the hearts are all open and manifest to God. What a comfort to the honest-hearted!

The Psalmist repeats this inquiry, saying, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" and then replies, "By taking heed thereto, according to thy Word." And then he frames for us this resolution: "I will meditate on thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word." Psa. 119:9, 15, 16.) Here is the secret of a pure and noble life, acceptable to God. It is to be attained, not merely by prayers and righteous resolutions, but in addition to these, by careful, painstaking **heed,** by systematic and diligent effort at self-cultivation, by the careful and persevering weeding out of evil thoughts and the diligent and constant cultivation of pure, benevolent and noble thoughts, and by nipping in the bud the weeds of perversity before they bring forth their hasty harvest of sinful words and deeds.

But observe, further, that this heed or care is to be taken, not according to the imperfect standard of our own judgment, but according to God's Word. **The standard by which we test our lives makes a vast difference in our conclusions.** The Psalmist further commends this standard to us, saying: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." [That is, if we take heed to our ways according to God's law, it will turn us completely from the path of sin to the path of righteousness.] The testimony [the instruction] of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple [the meek, teachable ones—clearly pointing out to them the ways of righteousness]. The statutes [the decrees, ordinances and precepts] of the Lord are right [the infallible rules of righteousness], rejoicing the heart [of the obedient]. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean [not a menial, servile fear, but a noble fear, begotten of love—a fear of falling short of his righteous approval], enduring forever. More to be desired are they [the law and the testimony of the Lord] than gold; yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned [concerning the dangers of the way and the snares of the adversary, and concerning everything which is calculated to discourage, or to hinder his growth in grace], and in keeping of them there is great reward."

"Who [in the use merely of his own fallible judgment and without the standard of God's law] can understand his errors [can rightly judge himself]?" But when, as we measure ourselves by this standard, we detect and deplore our short-comings, let us remember the Psalmist's prayer: "Cleanse thou me from secret faults"—thus supplementing our efforts by our prayers.

But there is still another part of this prayer which the Lord puts into our mouths. It reads: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." Let us consider what kind of sins would be presumptuous sins. To presume signifies to take for granted without authority or proof. **A presumptuous sin would therefore be taking for granted and asserting as truth something which God has not revealed, or the perversion of what he has revealed.** To claim and hold tenaciously as a part of God's plan any doctrine, merely on the ground of fallible human reason and without divine authority, would therefore be a presumptuous sin. . . . And there are many other sins of greater and less degree which partake of the same character. But the words here seem to refer directly to some particular error into which there is danger of drifting—"Then shall I be innocent from **the great transgression**"—evidently, **the sin unto death** referred to by the apostles also (John 5:16; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31). Such a sin would be that of presuming upon the love of God to bring us salvation, even though we should wilfully refuse it through the channel which he has appointed—the precious blood of Christ, shed for our redemption.

Well indeed may we pray and strive to be kept back from presumptuous sins—sins of pride and of arrogant self-will which does not meekly submit to the will of God. Let us, beloved, **beware of the slightest tendency toward pride and self-will, or the disposition to be wise above what is written, or to take for granted what God does not clearly promise.** "Then," indeed, if we watch and strive against the **very beginning** of that proud and haughty spirit which surely presages a fall, we shall be "innocent from **the great transgression.**"

"Blessed is the man whose **delight** is in the law of the Lord, and who doth meditate therein day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psa. 1:1-3.) If we make the Word of God the theme of our constant meditation, its principles will soon be assimilated and become part of our mental make up, making our characters more beautiful and commendable both to God and to our fellow men; and in harmony with this habit of the mind the acts of life will speak. The purified fountain will send forth sweeter waters than formerly, bearing refreshment and good cheer to all who come in contact with it. It will make happier homes, better husbands, better wives and better children. It will sweeten the temper, soften the voice, dignify the language, cultivate the manners, ennoble the sentiments and lend its charming grace to every simple duty. It will bring in the principle of love and cast out the discordant elements of selfishness. Thus it will make the home the very garden-spot of earth, where every virtue and every grace will have ample room to expand and grow.

It will not only thus favorably affect the individual and the home-life, but it will go out into the avenues of trade, and truth and fair-dealing will characterize all the business relations; and thus will God be honored by those who bear his name and wear the impress of his blessed spirit.

While the heights of perfection cannot be reached so long as we still have these imperfect bodies, there should be in every child of God a very perceptible and continuous growth in grace, and each step gained should be considered but the stepping-stone to higher attainments. If there is no perceptible growth into the likeness of God, or if there is a backward tendency, or a listless stand-still, there is cause for alarm. Let us constantly keep before our eyes the model which the Lord Jesus set for our example—that model of the complete fulfilment of the will of God, in which the whole law was kept blamelessly. Let us follow his steps of righteousness and self-sacrifice as nearly as a full measure of loving zeal and faithfulness and loyalty to God will enable us to do, and we shall have a blessed sense of the divine approval now and the glorious reward of divine favor in due time.—Z. '91:49-51.

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We believe that instead of all the Feet members being changed at one time, it will be a gradual work. One may be changed tonight, another tomorrow, etc. . . . The Psalmist prophetically says, "I have said, ye are gods, and all of you children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men"; and this Scripture we understand to refer to the dying process that comes to all of the Church, the same as to mankind in general. We are New Creatures, and hence the expression that we shall "die **like** men." As men die, so we will die. Men do not generally die in bunches; so we would think it strange if many of us should die at one time. The world will not discern any difference between our death and the death of other men.—Z. '15:216-217.

◆

All the elect are . . . sealed with the **same seal**; and all thus sealed are to see eye to eye, and be one in heart and hope and work.—Z. '91:1.

Pride, Ingratitude, Hypocrisy, Rebellion

II. Sam. 15: 1-12

Golden Text:—"Honor thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."—Exod. 20: 12.

LESSONS may be drawn from the lives of the ignoble, as well as from those of the noble. As the poet says:—

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We should make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."

This being so, then surely it is true also that the footprints of the evil-doers on life's pathway have lessons for us also, indicating to us which paths should be shunned, which elements of character should be restrained, which ambitions should be curbed. Following this course of instruction the divine Word holds up before the Spiritual Israelites not only noble precepts and counsels and examples of heroic devotion to truth and righteousness, but illustrations also of the course of evil-doers. Our lesson today belongs to this latter class. It considers Absalom, the son of King David, who at the time of this lesson was presumably nearly thirty years of age. His father, the Lord's anointed king over Israel, his mother, the daughter of a king of a neighboring realm, Absalom inherited princely qualities and manners and, being very beautiful, became a center of Israelitish pride. "In all Israel there was none to be so much praised for his beauty. From the sole of his foot, even to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him"; and the hair of his head is a proverb to this day.

It is worthy of note that those who are highly favored by nature, richly endowed in appearance or mental ability, are subject to temptations to a far greater degree than their fellows who are less talented, less handsome. Their beseting weakness is apt to be pride, self-esteem, to which ambition is apt to lend a helping hand. Thinking of Absalom and his beauty and his high position in the kingdom, reminds us of Lucifer and the glorious description given of him in the Scriptures—his high position and honor and his pride and ambition and the downfall to which they led. The very suggestion of these two characters, from this standpoint should bring a thrill of fear to the hearts of all who realize that we today of Spiritual Israel are princes, highly favored of our Father, the Great King, and greatly blessed with the beauty and perfection which come to us through our justification and greatly honored of our Father in the gracious hopes set before us in the Gospel of glory, honor and immortality, and greatly blessed also in the light of divine revelation granted to us, which gives us a wisdom superior to that of the world.

What if these blessings and mercies and favors should have their wrong effect upon us and bring us eventually to disaster, as was the case with Absalom and with Lucifer? The thought is sufficiently appalling to remind us of the Apostle's words, "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest [of becoming joint-heirs with our Redeemer], any of us should seem to come short of it"—through a lack of loyalty, a lack of allegiance, a lack of faith, a lack of humility.

A Murderer of the Brethren

It will be remembered that David's eldest son was Amnon, and that he had defiled his half-sister Tamar, the full sister of Absalom. King David, sorely vexed at the matter, appears to have been at a loss as to what manner of punishment he should properly meet out for the offense, so that two years passed without any being inflicted. Then Absalom took upon himself to be his sister's avenger. He made a feast, to which were invited all the King's children by his several wives. In the height of the feast, in disregard of the rules of etiquette and the claims of natural affection, Absalom slew his brother and then fled, from fear of justice, which, under their code, centered in his father, the King. What lesson is there in this experience for us? What should we copy? What avoid? In Spiritual Israel we are all princes, sons of the Great King, who is also the Judge. The lesson to us would properly be that the authority and responsibility for meeting out justice is not in our ambitions, but with the Father.

As the Scriptures declare, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." We are not to wait what seems to us a proper length of time, and then, if we see no divine punishment for what we consider to be no longer tolerable, to take the matter in our own hands—to murder one another. Nay, the command of our Great Teacher is, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." The lesson for us to learn is expressed in the Master's words, See to the beam in thine own eye, rather than put thyself to too much inconvenience examining the mote that is in thy brother's eye. To his own Master he standeth or falleth.

The parallel would not imply that literal murder would here be accomplished amongst the Lord's children. No, thank God! The world is too far advanced in civilization to make such a course practicable; but where the Absalom spirit is—the spirit of hatred, anger, envy, bitterness—strife is also. There is a modern method of assassination by the use of slanderous words, by insinuations, by the shrugging of the shoulders, etc. And this modern kind of murder is oftenest committed in the presence of the members of the royal family, the heavenly brotherhood. How terrible! do we say? Let us take heed that such blood-guiltiness, such "works of the flesh and the devil," be not upon us, else we shall never inherit the Kingdom.

The Ungrateful Son—Traitorous

Absalom remained for three years at the court of his grandfather, Talmai, king of Geshun in Syria. By the murder of his elder brother he had put himself next to the throne of Israel, heir-apparent, and this, possibly, was considerably his inspiring motive in the crime, although he affected that the crime was committed in defense of justice and principle. Alas! how treacherous is the human heart! How frequently do we find double motives operating therein! We see the advantage of those who, as children of God, follow implicitly the Father's Word and leave all the results to him. They thus show their faith in God's power, as well as in God's justice, and thus, as the Apostle intimates, they show that they have become partakers of a holy spirit of wisdom—"wisdom from above; first pure, then peaceable, easy of entreatment, full of mercy and good fruits," a spirit of wisdom which leaves in the Lord's hands his own matters and trusts fully to his care. This is indeed "The spirit of a sound mind." Let us, dear brethren of the Royal Spiritual Family, apply this principle in all of our dealings and thus receive thereby increasing blessings.

But Absalom realized that as an exiled prince his chances for acceptance as king of Israel would be comparatively small, in the event of his father's death. He therefore instituted an ingenious scheme by which his case was brought to his father's notice under most favorable conditions, and finally a respite or forgiveness or an invitation to return to his homeland was sent to him. As a continued showing of disfavor, his father, loving him the while, refused for two years to invite his wayward son to a personal visit and fellowship. Meantime the ambitious murderer skilfully managed his affairs so that, as the Scriptures declare, he "stole" the hearts of the men of Israel. He did not openly plot mischief against his father, the king, nor speak vilely respecting him, nor manifest any antagonism; he was too deep, too adroit, too wise with earthly wisdom for such a course. He stole the hearts of the people away from the king to himself by feigning extreme humility and extreme zeal for justice, and by careful attention to his personal appearance and by attention to those in influential positions. He got up early, contrary to the usage of princes, and went forth to the King's gate, where he could see the people who, some justly and some unjustly no doubt, were awaiting the king, hoping for contracts and decisions in their favor, etc. These, beholding the handsome and elegantly-dressed prince, bowed themselves to the ground after the manner of the east, only to be lifted up by the hands and kissed and told with affected modesty and love that they should not do that; that it was a king's business to serve his people and that the prince was merely sorry, so sorry, that it was not in his power to do for them all and more than they asked.

Thus for two years Absalom, the hypocrite and sycophant, endeavored (and was considerably successful in so doing) to draw to himself the love, the loyalty of the nation, which had belonged to his father David as the Lord's anointed. Evidently the young man was leaning to his own understanding and forgetting, if he ever knew, that the Lord God was the Ruler of that nation, and he alone had the power to designate who should be and who should not be his representative upon the throne.

Absalom's Open Rebellion

Our text says, "After forty years," but scholars are agreed that this is a copyist's blunder and that it should read "four years." Some ancient authorities read this "four years"; so does Josephus. Feeling sure that his mock humility, combined with his handsome appearance, gentle manners and affected love for the people and for justice, worked successfully on the minds of the people, Absalom was ready for his next step—open rebellion against his father, the king of the nation and the appointee of divine providence. Surely he did not realize his situation in the odds of divine power against him. Continuing his practice of hypocrisy he requested of his father the privilege of visiting the neighboring city of Hebron, which had been the capital before Jerusalem was taken.

He said he desired to do sacrifice there in fulfilment of a vow. He affected to be very humble and very religious, while his heart certainly was far from the Lord. "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" The king granted the request, which included the privilege of taking a certain number of companions and chief people from Jerusalem, without anything amiss being thought of it. What worldly wisdom this young man had! And how ignominiously his mock humility stands out to his discredit! And how his ingratitude to his father, and his lack of every element of principle and righteousness are conspicuous! For us, dear friends, to see in ourselves anything **in any degree or measure** apparently approaching such a picture, or in our course anything in any degree corresponding to this, should be to horrify us, to rebuke us, to quench the kindling fire.

Into the conspiracy was drawn King David's most valued counselor, Ahithophel, whose presence with the prince as one of his friends on the occasion would mean a tower of strength to his position and the attainment of his ambition. Many of the people, deceived for years, were drawn into this conspiracy. Besides, Absalom had carefully appointed men throughout the various tribes and various parts of the land district, who were posted for his designs and in full sympathy with them, and whose business it was to create a stampede in his favor, and to help by expressing evil insinuations against the king and expressing hopes of wonderful things, if Absalom took the kingship. These were to congratulate the tribes that they now had a most worthy king in Absalom, and to explain to them that when the trumpets were heard blowing this meant not that Absalom aspired to the kingship, but that he already was king.

Alas, that history shows so many perfidious characters like Absalom! And alas, dear friends, let us remember that while we have become New Creatures in Christ, we still have to contend with the mean, perfidious dispositions that were ours according to the flesh! Let us remember, too, that "we wrestle not with flesh and blood" merely, but additionally "with principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high positions." Let us on the contrary remember the Apostle's words, "Humble yourselves, therefore, brethren, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—1 Pet. 5:6.

"My soul, be on thy guard,
Ten thousand foes arise;
The hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the prize.

"O watch and fight and pray,
The battle ne'er give o'er;
Renew the conflict every day,
And help divine implore."

There comes a suggestion that we must "mark well the pathway and make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." We are all lame according to the flesh; some more, some less, but all need to observe the heavenly course and to walk circumspectly, seeing that pride and ambition are the greatest of foes to humanity and faith. We are reminded here of one feature in the story of "Pilgrim's Progress": When Christian and Hopeful had escaped from the dungeon of Giant Despair and returned to the Highway leading to the Celestial City, they erected a monument near the entrance to Bypath Meadow, which had led them astray. On the monument they put the following words, "Over this stile is the way to Doubting Castle, which is kept by Giant Despair. He despises the King of the Celestial Country and seeks to destroy his holy Pilgrims."

Satan is the great giant who through these many centuries seeks to draw us away from the narrow path, away from full confidence in God and away from reliance on God's power and his wisdom and his Truth, by which alone we can ever become heirs of the Kingdom.

Our Golden Text

While fully commending the propriety of honor to earthly parents, and appreciating the Lord's promise of blessing to such as obey it, we have in mind that the Great King Eternal, the Creator, has adopted us into his family and given us the spirit of sonship whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." He has given us "exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature" and sharers with our heavenly brother Jesus in his Messianic Kingdom. How we should honor him! How it should be the chief endeavor of life to us to glorify our Father in heaven! How we should hearken to his words and keep them before us—"If ye love me, keep my commandments!" How we should realize that the end of his commandment is Love—out of a pure heart, fervently! How we should realize that hereby we know that we love God, if we keep his commandments—and his commandments are not grievous unto us, if we delight to do his will! Of this character are the sons who, as copies of the Redeemer, will be the heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord in his Kingdom. Let us make no mistake, but remember that the "Well-done" blessing will be given only to those who attain such a character development.—Z. '08: 340-342.

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UNTO HIM BELONGETH ALL

"Just why I suffer loss
I can not know;
I only know my Father
Wills it so.
He leads in paths I cannot understand;
But all the way I know is wisely planned.

"My life is only mine
That I may use
The gifts he lendeth me
As he may choose;
And if in love some boon he doth recall,
I know that unto him belongeth all.

"I am his child, and I
Can safely trust;
He loves me, and I know
That he is just;
Within his love I can securely rest,
Assured that what he does for me is best."
—Z. '00: 229.

◆

It may be possible that some who have professed to see the spiritual things, some who have professed a fulness of consecration even unto death, some who have professed to appreciate the participation in the breaking of the One Loaf and the drinking of the one cup of fellowship with Christ in his death, have never really appreciated these things. Perhaps they not only deceived us by their statements, but also deceived themselves.—Z. '10: 117.

THANKFULNESS will make every trial and sacrifice on our part seem small, and proportionately easy to be offered, and it will make all of God's mercies and favors toward us proportionately grand and great and inspiring.—Z. '00: 332.

◆

As children of God, in the midst of Satan's dominion and in opposition to his power, let us beware "lest Satan should get an advantage of us (through one or another of the numerous snares he has set for our feet); for we are not ignorant of his devices." (2 Cor. 2: 11.) Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood (there are mighty invisible powers under the leadership of the prince of this world plotting to accomplish the stumbling of the feet of the body of Christ, and flesh and blood are only used as tools for that purpose by the great Adversary), but (we wrestle) against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (in places of authority and power). (Eph. 6: 12.) Yet, if well armed with the whole armor which God supplies, and following our Captain's leading, we are safe; for greater is he that is for us than all that are against us.—Z. '91: 25.

◆

Alas, how few of those who recognize their trusteeship are faithful to it and will be able to render their report with joy, and to hear the Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"
—Z. '03: 53.

"Temptations never give us notice. Can we expect them to do so? The sailor does not expect to have notice of every gale of wind that blows upon him. The soldier in battle does not reckon to have notice of every bullet that is coming his way. By what apparatus could we be kept aware of every advance of the evil one? The very essence of temptation often lies in the suddenness of it. We are carried off our feet before we are aware. Yet we must not say, because of this, 'I cannot help it;' for we ought to be all the more watchful, and live all the nearer to God in prayer. We are bound to stand against a sudden temptation, as much as against a slower mode of attack.—Z. '91: 118.

◇

This waiting under severe trial or affliction, will indeed be a blessing in disguise, if the soul be rightly exercised unto patience, endurance, faith, hope, meekness, longsuffering, kindness and true Christian fortitude. And it will be in the darkness of these waiting seasons that the blessed stars of hope will shine the brightest, and the bright Morning Star, the harbinger of day, will shed his beams into the deepest recesses of our hearts. "They that wait upon the Lord," says the Prophet (Isa. 40: 31), "shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."
—Z. '95: 167.

◇

A real father would much rather die himself than give a beloved child up to death. There is far more love displayed in God giving his only begotten and well-beloved Son up to death than there would have been in God dying himself, had that been possible. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 14:13); "but God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5: 8.) The proof of the love of God is not only the most conclusive on record, but it is also the most conclusive conceivable.—Z. '91: 135.

◇

Our great all-wise, all-powerful heavenly Father has numberless messengers at his command, and has deputized and appointed many of these to care for the interests of his cause on earth—especially to watch over and minister unto the very elect. Nothing can by any means, therefore, harm these, except as the heavenly Father sees that the earthly injury or disadvantage would prove profitable either to the individual new creature or to the Lord's general cause. This is in full accord with his general assurance that all things shall work together for good to them that love him.—Z. '04: 303.

◇

We hear a great many say, when they have lost control of their temper, or have been petulant or morose or ill-natured or discourteous, Well, that's my way; I do not mean any harm. They acknowledge the matter, and seek to justify themselves by saying that it is natural to them. But no human being should live according to what is natural to his or her fallen nature. A being created in the image of God, and still retaining some traces of his original Godlikeness, should live above the plane of the lower animals, which follow merely their natural instincts and passions.—Z. '14: 195.

The more advanced the Christian, the more should we expect, that he would be able to rule his spirit—"casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought" to the will of God in Christ. And if we rule our mind, our thoughts, we shall rule our tongue. If the thought were not in the mind, the tongue would not utter it.—Z. '14: 196.

◇

Our Master forewarned us saying, "It must needs be that offences come." The Apostle endorsed the same sentiment when he said, "There must needs be divisions amongst you that the approved may be made manifest." Again, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that the Lord permits reproaches to come upon his cause today, as he did in times past, for the purpose of making the Truth unpopular, to the intent that only those who love the Truth above all else and who are fully consecrated to its service should be willing to bear the reproaches which the Adversary would be permitted to bring against the Lord's cause and those who stand prominently connected with it. To all such we say, Be of good courage, God hath not cast off his people and never will. The trials and difficulties of the journey will all be understood fully, completely, when we reach the end of the way. Our Father planned it all—the narrow and rugged way by which the Master and his "little flock" of faithful followers shall finally reach the heavenly goal.
—Z. '06: 149.

◇

The faithful, like Daniel, will set themselves for the attainment of their object at any cost. Their faith tells them that their object is worthy of their effort; their love inspires them, or, as the Apostle would say, constrains them to obedience even to the extent of laying down their lives in the Lord's service; neither count they their lives dear unto them that they may win Christ and be found in him. But there is another side to this question. There are compensations to be had on the Lord's side and the side of righteousness. Sobriety, self-denial, do not mean merely disappointments, trials, deprivations, oppositions, but they mean also the King's favor. They mean the satisfaction of the heart, the mind; they mean peace with God and peace with our own consciences, and they mean additionally clearness of mind and restfulness of heart.—Z. '05: 281-282.

◇

There is a grave danger of saying things, or of doing things, under a momentary impulse, that our heart, our consecrated judgment would not approve; hence the necessity of bringing our thoughts and impulses into subjection. We are to consider, What would be the effect of my words or my actions upon another? Would it bring harm? Would it be an injury, or cause needless pain, for me to say or do this thing, or would it do good? By thus scrutinizing himself, by thus taking himself in hand, and ruling his spirit, the child of God is showing his earnest desire of heart to be pleasing to the Lord and true to his covenant. And those who learn to rule their own spirit according to the will of the Father are the ones whom He will be pleased to make joint-heirs with His Son in His Kingdom.
—Z. '14: 196.

While the Scriptures are very particular to maintain liberty of conscience for all of the Lord's people, and while they assure us that in Christ there is neither male nor female, neither bond nor free, but that his consecrated ones are "all one" in him, his members, nevertheless they distinctly set before us the thought that God is the supervisor of the affairs of his people and that their prosperity will result from their **appreciation of the Lord's Headship** and their recognition of those whom God hath "set in the Body"—apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers, helps, etc. The Lord's people are all children of God possessed of "the liberty wherewith Christ makes free," yet he has not given us a liberty to sin, but a freedom from sin, its slavery, its blight. These liberated ones, introduced by faith and consecration into the family of God, need to realize that the Father's house and all of its arrangements are under heaven's first Law—order. They must learn to willingly and gladly submit to this order **as the condition upon which they may abide in the Divine Love and favor and participate in the family blessings.** Z. '09:186.

◇

We are to "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Whatever we do we have first thought about. We sometimes say, "I acted before I thought." What we mean is that we acted before we gave the matter serious thought. No thought should be harbored in our minds which is not in full harmony with the Word of God. As Christ was obedient to the Father in everything—saying, "Let not My will, but Thine, be done"—so every one of us should bring our thoughts into obedience to Christ. Our Redeemer is our Exemplar.

All the members of Christ's Body must have the same mind that was in Christ, must manifest the spirit of our Master. "Let us humble ourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due time." (1 Peter 5:6.) **No one can wholly follow the Lord without much of the spirit of humility,** without bringing his **thoughts** into subjection to the Lord. This is not the time to exalt ourselves and to show how we can shine. But we are to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9), who has called us with this Heavenly Calling, not for our own sakes merely, but for His own glory and the blessing of others. God's glory is to be our chief concern always. We are to be efficient servants of the Lord, through His grace, not of our own strength. If we are to be great in the end, we must be humble. We must gladly be servants of all now. **We must be glad to serve, not only when there is honor attached, but when the service is unnoticed or unknown. Z. '16:132.**

◇

We shall not do our best unless we set ourselves very diligently about it, and determine that we will by the help of the Lord attain as full control of our flesh as is possible. If we make up our minds that we will conquer, much can be accomplished. Z. 15:73.

◇

It is not the approval of the "wolves," in sheep's clothing or without it, that is to be courted by the true under-shepherd.—Z. '03:38.

Truly, our Lord has "brought us into His banqueting House, and His banner over us is Love!" (Cant. 2:4.) Truly, "He holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved," despite all the thousand snares laid for our feet by the great Adversary and his servants—many of them unwittingly serving him. We can see that long ago we might have been overcome by the Adversary's attacks had not our God been a Wall of Protection round about us. "Our lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places!" (Psalm 16:6.) But it is only the faithful who are thus kept.—Z. '14:216.

◇

The heavenly Counselor instructs us, saying, "Forget not the assembling of yourselves together—and so much the more as ye see the day drawing on." The meek who receive the counsel will seek so far as they are able to make use of all the means of grace which the Lord provides, for all possible fellowship of spirit with those who have the mind of Christ they will enjoy and seek to use. Those who do otherwise are rejecting the counsel of the Lord against themselves—to their own detriment and injury. **Wherever the spirit of the Lord is in any heart, it will surely seek fellowship in others of like spirit.** Hence, if our own hearts are in good condition we will proportionately desire fellowship with the Lord, expressing ourselves in prayer and hearing the testimony of the Lord through his Word in reply; and similarly we will enjoy mingling with the Lord's people. "He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen." Any lack of fellowship with all who love the Lord and are consecrated to him should be considered by us as a sure sign of a spiritual decline, and should be correspondingly opposed with all our energy, until our hearts come back to that condition in which we have (as an assurance that we have passed from death unto life) the fact that we love the brethren.—1 John 3:14. Z. '98:7.

◇

When as New Creatures we made full consecration to the Lord and surrendered all the rights of the human nature our flesh did not agree to the contract, but protested. Subsequently it found it good policy to reason with the New Creature quietly, calmly, urging moderation in righteousness and self-sacrifice—urging, too, that we should not be more extreme than are others: that we should not make ourselves foolish in the estimation of others, lest this bring contempt upon the cause we desire to serve.

Ah, how shrewd, how cunning, how deceitful is the flesh! If we would give heed to its plausible reasoning we would go out of the race altogether, failing to sacrifice, and hence failing to become members of the "royal priesthood," and to share the Kingdom glory of our Redeemer. Z. '09:151.

◇

"Take heed unto yourselves"; well did the Apostle realize that those who do not keep guard over their hearts can not faithfully serve the interests of the Church in general.—Z. '03:103.

◇

It requires the grace of humility to accept slights and indignities without appearing to notice them. —Z. '04:300.

Helpful Thoughts From The Volumes

To maintain their standing as the cleansed Sanctuary, against organized opposition and great numbers, becomes a severe test of courage and faith, which only a few seem able to endure; the majority follow the course of their predecessors, and endeavor to make themselves respectable in the eyes of the world. C. 120.

◆

Remember that your observation, as well as the Scriptures, indicates that of the many who accept the call few will be chosen, because but few prove faithful to their covenant when on trial. C. 222.

◆

One by one, imperceptibly to the world, the saints are now being changed, and are joining the company of the Church triumphant; and those who remain to the last proclaim the everlasting gospel until the door is shut and all opportunity to labor is at an end. Then they will "stand" in faith and patience and await their change, accepting deliverance joyfully through whatsoever agency God may be pleased to permit its accomplishment. C. 241.

◆

The test of membership in the New Creation will not be membership in any earthly organization, but union with the Lord as a member of his mystical body. F. 78.

◆

The wisdom that is pure is simple, is guileless, honorable, open: it loves the light; it is not of darkness, of sin, nor favorable to anything that needs to be hidden: it recognizes the hidden works as usually works of darkness, the secret things as usually evil things. It is peaceable so far as would be consistent with honesty and purity; it desires peace, harmony, unity. But since peace is not first, therefore it can only be morally at peace, and fully in harmony with those things which are honest, pure and good. F. 99.

◆

Every time the New Creature finds it necessary to seek mercy and help, he has a fresh reminder of the necessity of the Redeemer's atoning work—realizing that Christ's sacrifice not only sufficed for the sins that are past—for Adam's sin and for our personal blemishes up to the time that we first came to the Father through the merit of the Son—but that, in addition, his righteousness by his one sacrifice for all, covers all our blemishes, mental, moral and physical, that are not willingly, wilfully ours. Thus the New Creature has a continual reminder throughout his sojourn in the narrow way that he was bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ; and his experiences, even in his failures, are continually drawing him nearer to the Lord in appreciation both of his past work as Redeemer and his present work as Helper and Deliverer. "F." page 145.

◆

The Lord has made provision in Christ for every necessity of ours which could possibly arise. In him he has freely given us all things. "F." page 184.

As soon as the error of word or act or deed has been recognized and the injury to another made good as far as possible, the throne of grace should be promptly sought—sought in faith, nothing doubting. "F." 146.

◆

Our Lord, speaking of the elect Church as a whole, intimates that various trials and testings must come to them, and seems to imply that these will be intensified toward the close of this Gospel Age, and that they will be permitted to such an extent that they will deceive all except the "very elect."—Matt. 24:24. There is an encouragement in this: it implies not that the "very elect" will have superior mental ability by which they will be able to discern the various subtleties of the Adversary in this evil day; nor does it imply that they will have attained perfection in their control of their earthen vessels so that they cannot err: but, rather, it means that to those who abide in Christ, grace sufficient, wisdom sufficient, aid sufficient will be granted for their time of need. What consolation is in this for all who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the gospel! What a confidence it gives us to feel that our anchorage is within the veil —in Christ. F. 191-192.

◆

The Apostle points out that the humblest member in the Church who attains to perfect love, has reached a position higher and nobler in the sight of the Lord than that of any apostle or prophet or teacher who lacks the grace of love. F. 238.

◆

We may be sure that no one could by the Lord's approval long hold the position of apostle or prophet or teacher in the Church unless he attained a standing of perfect love, or sought, at least, to attain to that standard. Otherwise he assuredly would be permitted to drift into darkness, and perhaps become a teacher of error instead of a teacher of the Truth,—a servant of Satan to sift the brethren. F. 239.

◆

We have been called of the Lord, and have turned aside from the course of the world to follow in the narrow path; that is our business. F. 584.

◆

When we have a great deal of difficulty with our tongues, there is a great deal that is not altogether right about our hearts. F. 587.

◆

It is in the nature of things that each human being must seek some companionship; and experience attests the truthfulness of the proverb, that "Birds of a feather flock together." If, therefore, the fellowship of the spiritually minded is not appreciated, longed for and sought after, if we do not improve opportunities to enjoy it, we may be sure these are unhealthy indications as respects our spiritual condition. F. 309.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER THIRTY-THREE

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Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 5:1-11.

"Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—Gal. 6:7.

THE lesson of this sad narrative is one of special warning to the whole Church. It is the only case in the Church on record where the penalty of wilful violation of a covenant with God met with summary punishment. Many since that day have doubtless similarly violated their covenant and no such results followed. With great boldness many have not only done so, but they have gone still farther and made merchandise of the interests of the truth; and still judgment tarries. Nevertheless, the Lord's eye is upon every one of the consecrated household, and no **inequality will be seen in his dealings when his work is completed.** . . .

The particular lesson which the Lord in this case desired to impress upon the whole Church from then till now was **the solemn obligation involved in our covenant with him of entire consecration to his service.**

"While this property remained in thy hand was it not thine own?" said Peter; "and after it was sold was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." The complicity of the husband and wife in the deception made very manifest the wilfulness and deliberate intention of both; and the penalty which followed was a warning of God's righteous indignation against all hypocrisy and deceit and the holding of the truth in unrighteousness.—Rom. 1:18. . . . We would counsel all to take heed that they hold not the truth in unrighteousness. If we have consecrated all to the Lord let us ever bear in mind the solemn obligation of our covenant. This is the lesson which God designed to impress upon us all, and let us lay it well to heart. But while we would carefully heed the lesson, let us not fear that God will not patiently and tenderly bear with our weaknesses while our hearts are right toward him and while we strive to overcome them. God is just, loving and merciful—slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. Z. '92:218.

GENERAL CONVENTION

General Convention of STANDFAST BIBLE STUDENTS at I.O.O.F. Hall, Douglas Street, Victoria, B.C., Saturday, Sunday and Monday, May 22nd, 23rd and 24th, 1920. Two meals will be provided daily for all conventioners by the local Ecclesia. Reception Committee will meet boats and trains. For further information please write Brother J. H. Bartlett, P.O. Box 7, Victoria, B.C.

We are to realize that no two of the Lord's people are just alike.—Z. '16:35.

◆

Our dear Master's time for drinking at the brook is past, yet the lessons and encouragements therefrom are still before us in the Scripture records. It is now our time to drink of the brook of experience,—to learn the lessons that are necessary to our preparation for the Kingdom. It is not enough that we have tasted of the brook of experience, that we have learned something of obedience, that we have endured some trials, that on some occasions we have learned obedience through the things we have suffered: we must continue drinking until we can gladly say—Father, thy will, not ours be done! If we drink not of the brook in the way we shall **not** share in the glory to follow.—Z. '02:13.

◆

No tongue or pen can tell the peace, the joy and the blessing which **a clear. knowledge of the true God has brought into our heart and life.** The Story of God's Wisdom, Justice, Power and Love fully satisfies the cravings of both our head and our heart. We are seeking no further. There is nothing more to be desired than to get this wonderful Story more clearly before our mind, and to appreciate more and more the Divine character as illustrated by the great Divine Plan of the Ages, which our Heavenly Father is gradually outworking for the blessing, first of the Church, and afterwards of all the families of the earth.—Z. '14:378.

◆

It is hard that our good should be evil spoken of, that we should be declared to be poisonous to every religious sentiment. This is a part of our experience. To have people separate us from their company would be a trifling thing. To die in some respectable way would be a small matter. But to be put into a false light, to have our good made out to be evil, these are trying experiences. Our attitude is to be the same as that of our Master, "The cup that our Lord shall pour, shall we not drink it?" We have the word of the Apostle that all things shall work for good to those who love God, to the called according to His purpose. With these thoughts before our minds, we are to be of good courage and to accept the cup of experience which the Lord has for us. We know not how near that cup may be. Perhaps with the Church it is the same as with Himself. Perhaps there will be a measure of acknowledgment that we are right about the Divine Plan. Then through the machinations of the church systems we may be delivered up—possibly to death.—Z. '14:382.

◆

A type must not be used to teach a doctrine, but merely to **illustrate** one that is already taught in plain terms.—Z. '92:100.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER THIRTY-THREE

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18: 51.

St. Peter's Exhortation to the Elders

"Humble yourselves . . . . under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."—1 Peter 5: 6.

AS THOSE who have received Divine grace and the knowledge of the Divine purpose, the Lord's people have certain ambitions which are right and proper, and which should be rightly exercised, regulated and governed. No one should be without a laudable ambition. We cannot imagine God to be without ambition. Those who have little or none pass through life in a kind of maze, accomplishing very little for themselves or others, and usually fail in all they undertake.

There are, however, noble and ignoble ambitions. Some people are ambitious to become great, renowned; others are ambitious to rule; still others are ambitious for wealth, for social distinction, or for titles and honor amongst men. These are all selfish ambitions, yet they are the power that moves the world today—in business, social, political and even religious circles. These are all wrong ambitions; and though they may not all result in evil, yet they are all selfish, and tend toward evil. Many are seduced by selfish ambitions into doing those things of which their consciences do not approve.

The Christian has set before him the most noble ambition possible. God is calling from the world a people for His Name. Before these He sets the loftiest ambition. These are invited to become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord. This is an ambition which inspires them to develop all the higher qualities of mind and character, in order to prepare themselves for the society, friendship and fellowship of the Heavenly Father and the Lord. Let us have this high ambition ever before us, as an incentive to the most earnest endeavor to heed the Word of the Lord.

Those who take this course are very pleasing to the Father. He has a great work to be done, and is seeking a people who will do it. Christ Jesus is the Head of this great work, and His Kingdom is to rule and bless the world, that in the ages to come, God may show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us. (Eph. 2: 7.) Those who appreciate this high calling wish to be where God has invited them to be. Those who do not care for what God has offered or who do not wish to conform to the terms should not enter the race for the prize.

Those who have the heavenly ambition should not forget that they have the treasure of the new nature in earthen vessels. To this class it becomes a laudable ambition to serve one another and to build one another up in the most holy faith. The Bride is to make herself ready. (Rev. 19: 7.) So these should seek to get ready themselves and to help others of the dear family of God.

Danger Involved in the Eldership

To desire the office of a bishop, a shepherd, is a good ambition. (1 Tim. 3: 1.) If one properly attends to the shepherding of the flock, he will not have time for other interests. Those who have been called to the position of Eldership amongst the Lord's people should consider this an honor and a privilege from the Lord; and they should be very careful to seek it, not for filthy lucre's sake, but with a ready mind. (1 Peter 5: 1-4.) But in seeking this position **let each one remember that there is danger of the development of pride and the assumption of power.**

Those who have the high privilege of serving as an Elder Brother should watch themselves to see that they do not lord it over God's heritage. They should remember that they are not the Chief Shepherd, but only under-shepherds. If any should lord it over the flock, he would bring injury to himself as well as to the Church; for in thus doing he would be cultivating a spirit of pride.

St. Peter tells us that "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5: 5.)

Therefore if in the Lord's service one is humble, his course not only inures to the benefit of the Class, but it is the **only way** by which anyone will gain a position in the Kingdom. The Eldership is an honorable office which not only has great privileges attached to it, but has also great temptation **and great danger.** St. James says, "My brethren, be not many [of you] masters [teachers], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."—James 3:1.

The Apostle exhorts those that are Elders doing a work that is necessary to be done, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." Everything is being done by the mighty power of God, by which He is causing all things to work together for good. **We cannot interfere with the Divine will. We might permit pride or fond desire to hinder our own progress; but we cannot hinder the Plan of God.**

We all desire to seek the best way to serve others and yet to gain the great reward. St. Peter shows us that way—"Humble yourselves." As the poet has expressed it,

"I am afraid to touch
Things that involve so much."

This spirit will make us very fearful of developing any pride or bombast or desire of lording it over others. So, then, we humble ourselves and remember that God will especially bless those who are more lowly, more trustful in the Lord, and in due time will exalt them—at the Second Coming of our Lord.

Sometimes, indeed, the humble-minded of the Lord's people may be less esteemed in the Church than are some who lack this important quality of character. There is in mankind a general tendency toward brow-beating. They would rather have some one who will ride rough-shod over them than one who is gentle and moderate. Therefore they may not like us. But we are not to seek what they would like best in us. Rather we are to remember that we are to serve the Lord in His way, and that our chief responsibility in the Lord's sight is for **ourselves.** We are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt us in due time.

Pride in Knowledge of Truth Injurious

All these matters show us that our proper attitude is that of humility. The sentiment of our hearts should not be that of pride, but of meekness, humility, faithfulness.

Pride is selfishness gone to seed. The selfish spirit greedily gathers to itself as much as possible of all that it esteems good and valuable—wealth, learning, honor, fame and distinction among men. A measure of success in the acquisition of these treasures leads the selfish soul to a feeling of complacency, independence and indifference to the well-being of others. This spirit, gradually, but rapidly developing into arrogance, self-assertive pride, will continue to ripen with every gleam of the sunlight of temporal prosperity. As selfishness continues to ripen, it swells itself to ridiculous proportions and delights to vaunt itself, and gloats over its imagined importance and worthiness of honor and praise.

How much easier and how much wiser is the course of humility! The humble spirit seeketh not its own, is not puffed up, does not attempt to speculate upon inflated values, does not think of itself more highly than it ought to think, but thinks soberly—neither overrating nor underrating its own acquirements or achievements. Humility strives always to do business on a solid basis, though it contends lawfully to acquire a real worthiness and to achieve the true glory of the Divine commendation and favor.

There is a disposition on the part of many to be rather boastful on account of the Truth, as though we had originated the Truth. How foolish this is! We have made no truth. We have merely gotten rid of some of the errors that formerly blinded our eyes. **The Truth is God's.** He has allowed us to see out of the darkness of ignorance and superstition into the Truth of His Plan. If a man who had seen a beautiful picture should then boast as though he had painted it, we would say, "Foolish man! You did not **make** that picture. You merely **looked at it.** You have nothing to boast of concerning it."

We did not make any part of God's Plan of the Ages. If we had attempted to do so, we would have made a failure of it. Our attitude of mind, then, should be, "Come, we will show you what God has arranged, what God has pictured." Thus we would glorify God and be helpful to others; for to whatever extent we manifest pride or self-consciousness in the Truth, to that extent we do injury to ourselves and to others.

Our proper course, therefore, is to make it plain at the very beginning that we are of the right spirit—the meek, humble spirit of the Master. God is permitting us to see things in His Word, concerning which it is His due time to turn on the light. The picture was there all along, but the clouds and darkness made it so dim that we were not able to discern its beauties. Now the light is being turned on, and, as the poet has expressed it,

"Wonderful things in the Bible we see."

Instead of self-confidence, wisdom dictates a distrustfulness of self, remembering its weaknesses and imperfections, and correspondingly the greater reverence for God and reliance upon Him, which more than anything else will strengthen us and enable us to depart from the evil of our fallen estate.

It is indeed no easy matter to tread the pathway of humility, to continually check the human aspirations, and to keep the sacrifice on the altar until it is fully consumed. But thus it is that we are to work out our own salvation to the Divine nature with fear and trembling, lest we come short of worthiness for the prize promised to the faithful overcomers who tread closely in the footsteps of our blessed Forerunner, who was meek and lowly of heart.—Phil. 2:8, 12.

It is when we are thus humble and faithful that the Lord makes us His chosen vesels to bear His name to others. Thus, emptied of self and filled with His Spirit, and with His Truth, we can go forth, strong in the Lord of Hosts and in His mighty Power do valiant service as soldiers of the Cross.
—Z. '13: 56, 57.

ST. PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE ELDERS

"Take heed to yourselves . . . for grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."—Acts 20: 29, 30.

THESE words were addressed to the Elders of the Church at Ephesus. St. Paul, going toward Jerusalem, had found himself not far from Ephesus, and had sent word to the Elders that he would remain there a little while, and would be glad to meet them once more. They came and held a lengthy conference with him. This text is part of his message to them. He told them that he would not see them again, and exhorted them to take heed to themselves. **It behooves every one to take heed to himself more than to others. And unless a man learns to rule his own spirit, he could not be in a proper condition to rule others.**

This is particularly true of all Elders. They should watch **themselves.** Because of the honor which the Church gives them, they are in danger of being carried away by a feeling of self-importance —self-conceit. They are in danger of becoming arrogant. But the message is to take heed to **themselves,** and to **the flock of God,** over whom they are made overseers. They are to recognize their position as representatives, not only of the Congregation, but also of the Lord. This position being given them in the appointed way—an election by the stretching forth of the hand—they are not only to take this as the word of the Church, but also to realize that they are chosen of the Holy Spirit. They are to recognize this care of the Church as their great mission, an important service to be rendered in the name of the Lord.

Wolves and Apostate Sheep

There are two particular reasons why Elders need to be on guard. The first reason, as given by the Apostle, was that grievous wolves would enter in among them, who would not spare the flock. The intimation seems to be that the wolves are not **part of the flock** at any time. They would not represent themselves as **wolves,** however. The Apostle's warning would seem to imply that a certain class of people of a wolfish nature would seek to associate themselves with the Church. Our Lord warned, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Matt. 7: 15.) This seems to imply the thought of deception—walking like sheep, going about amongst the sheep and representing themselves to be sheep, wearing sheep's clothing, but never being real sheep. Their object in coming into the flock is selfish, their influence is that of a wolf amongst sheep. A wolf worries the sheep—his intention is to kill them, to suck their blood.

So there seems to be a class who, for no reason that we can imagine, pervert the truth, injuring the flock, stirring up arguments that confuse the flock, destroying them as New Creatures, and dragging them down to death. Presumably there has been such a class all the way down through the Age. While our text does not imply that sheep could ever become wolves, perhaps some of us have known persons who at one time were sheep, but who after a while manifested a wolfish disposition, and took pleasure in doing all that they could to injure the flock. The Lord and the Apostle warn us that we should beware of those who come in amongst the sheep, palming themselves off as sheep.

In addition to this danger from wolves, there will be dangers among themselves. The Apostle points this out as a **very subtle** danger. In addition to those of the wolfish nature, some in a class will engage in service as teachers, and by speaking perverse things will seek to draw away disciples unto themselves. They seek to draw them away as **their own.** Their sentiment seems to be, **This is my class, my flock**—not recognizing that the Church is the **Lord's Flock,** that they are the **Lord's sheep.** In this there is a selfish attitude quite contrary to the Spirit of the Lord and to the Scriptures. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" is a principle of the Divine Government. If any one would be a true Elder, a real servant of the Lord, he is to remember these things, and to avoid everything that would be of a self-seeking spirit. Otherwise, he may be sure that he will do injury, not only to himself, but to others also, by such a course.—Z. '14: 29-30.

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If we judge—closely inspect or scrutinize—ourselves, our thoughts, words and actions, we shall require less judging and disciplining by the Lord to correct our faults. If we realize that we have been remiss in any way in keeping our vows, if we think that we have been lax in some particular at any time, it is helpful to impose some penalty upon ourselves that we shall **feel.** We should go to the Lord in earnest prayer, asking forgiveness, and promising Him by His grace to strive to be more watchful in the future. We should **daily** scrutinize ourselves along this line, and never lightly pass over any failure. How precious and comforting the realization that our merciful High Priest is touched with the feeling of our infirmities! We should never, however, relax our vigilance because of this knowledge, or take any advantage of His mercy. But we rejoice that we have a Mercy Seat to which we can go as soon as we are conscious of our inability to be all that we would, and rejoice to know that we shall not be turned away.—Z. '14: 359, 360.

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The developed Christian will surely find himself counting present trials and difficulties, even though severe to the natural man, to be but "light afflictions, not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."—Z. '02: 40.

◆

The Christian's **habit of thought** has much indeed to do with his spiritual progress or retrogression, as it is also an index of his spiritual state. . . . By "habit of thought" we mean that normal condition to which the mind habitually returns in the moments of mental leisure.—Z. '95: 250.

The Relationship of Congregations and Elders

TO THOSE in position as elders in the Church the Lord says, "Be not ye called Rabbi [a great man, a master]; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren;" while to the congregation of his people he also says, "Call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye [any of you] called masters [i.e., neither give nor receive titles of any kind], for one is your Master, even Christ."—Matt. 23:9, 10.

No marks or badges of distinction or flattering homage of any kind may be tolerated in the body of Christ. No brother, however efficient or useful, should desire it or receive it from the church without protest and rebuke; and none should so far forget the admonition of the Lord as to bestow it. All ye are brethren—brethren of like passions and all subject to infirmities; and let each take heed that "no man put a stumbling-block [to pride or vanity or any other evil thing], or any occasion to fall, in his brother's way." (Rom. 14:13.) Many indeed have been the prominent ones in the Church who have been overcome by flatteries—undue praise, worshipful reverence—arising mainly from the unwarranted presumption on the part of the flock that the elder brethren who minister to them in spiritual things are beyond the reach of temptation or the possibility of stumbling. It is this lack of consideration of the Lord's command that often makes the position of a leading brother one of peculiar peril. It was flattery of the leaders of the Great Reformation that stayed the progress of that good work and caused many of them of understanding to fall from their steadfastness. (Dan. 11:34, 35.) But let it not be so among us: let each strive to shield the other from temptation, and to edify and build up in every principle of righteousness and truth, and in soberness of mind and watchfulness against all the intoxicating influences of the spirit of the world.

There is a vast difference, however, between a healthful, cordial brotherly love and sympathy and warm and grateful appreciation of faithful service, and that unwholesome sentimentalism which savors of the spirit of the world, and which is always as fickle as it is false. The manly Christian will always discountenance everything that savors of worshipful reverence and flattery; and when offered, will say, in manner if not in word, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant. . . . Worship God" (Rev. 22:9); but the less mature will often court and receive flattery to their own injury. It is for this reason that the Apostle counsels the choosing of elder brethren of established character for leadership, rather than a "novice." While the Lord arranged that the Church should have some apostles, elders, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc., he would not have us use any of these names as titles of honor; and therefore, while recognizing these positions of service in the Church, we should always continue to address and to speak of these brethren merely as brethren—brethren beloved in the Lord.

While the Church is thus guarded on the one hand against the worldly spirit of vain glory, she is equally guarded on the other hand against that cold, unappreciative, cynical disposition which in that envious, pharisaical spirit plainly says, "Give God the glory, we know that this man is a sinner." "We beseech you, brethren," says the Apostle, "to acknowledge them which labor among you, presiding over you in the Lord, and admonishing you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."—1 Thes. 5:12, 13.

Again he says, "Have confidence in your leaders, and submit yourselves [i.e., if you, according to the Lord's methods, have chosen the right kind, or rather if you have permitted the Lord to choose them for you in the way he has indicated, as shown above]; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief."—Heb. 13:17.

Thus, while the elders are cautioned against assuming to be lords over God's heritage, the flock is also cautioned not to defy the elders, nor to blindly and worshipfully follow them without proving their teachings by the Word of God, but all, in humility and meekness, are to harmoniously co-operate together as one body for the upbuilding of itself in love and in all the Christian graces, and for the general advancement of the work of the Lord.

—I. Pet. 5:1-11: Z. '95:266, 267

"Bear Ye One Another's Burdens"

Galatians 6:2.

THOSE WHO LOOK upon the Bible as a collection of moral precepts designed for the regulation of the world in general, are very far from the proper estimate of its object and scope: for the Bible is not addressed to the world at all. The whole book, from beginning to end, is the inheritance of the saints—"the sanctified in Christ Jesus." To them, all the apostolic epistles are addressed.

The book of Revelation is also similarly addressed. And the Apostle Peter, in referring to the prophecies of the Old Testament, says even of the prophets that "not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister." (1 Pet. 1:12. See also Dan. 12:4, 8, 9.) And the Apostle Paul says that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we [the sanctified in Christ Jesus] through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Rom. 15:4.) Consequently, all that was written aforetime by Moses and the prophets—whether of history or law or prophecy or type or precept—was designed specially for us who are in Christ, for the instruction and comfort of the children of God. And not one iota of it belongs to the unregenerate world. It is a "light which shineth in a dark place" to **Christians:** it is "a lamp to **our** feet, and a light to **our** path." And whatever light the worldly get from it, reaches them indirectly—as reflected from the children of God, who "shine as lights in the world." **"Ye,"** said our Lord, "are the light of the world."—Phil. 2:15; Matt. 5:14.

The plan of God, once discerned, indirectly inculcates every principle of morality and virtue by showing just what God designs to have us do; by showing, first, how he created us perfect and glorious in his own image and designed us for everlasting life in the enjoyment of his favors; next, that everything in us which is short of that original perfection is due to sin and renders us unworthy of life. Then there is the recognition of sin; and thus the glorious plan for both our legal and our actual deliverance from sin and death is opened up, and the final restitution of all things is assured to the loyal and obedient sons of God; and all the necessary provisions thereto are made manifest.

As the plan is now clearly outlined we see how history and prophecy and type and law all minister to the one grand design of the Book of books, in which the reverent and careful student finds the highest incentive to purity and holiness, and the most perfect delineation of that praiseworthy character which he should seek to build up, and in contrast with which the deformity of every evil is manifest.

Among the instructions to the children of God is the one above cited—"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." The law of Christ we have seen to be the law of love: and Love says, "Bear ye one another's burdens." There are times in the experience of almost every one when the surges of trouble roll high, and the timid, shrinking soul is almost overwhelmed by them. And then how soothing is the sympathy and counsel of a fellow-member of the body of Christ! Worldly-minded friends may sympathize, but their counsel is almost sure to be wrong. Hence the necessity of fellowship in the body of Christ, and of disfellowship with the world.

It is not always necessary to tell one's sorrows and perplexities to another, and to have their sympathy and aid: **in most cases they are better untold, except to the Lord.** But Love's quick discernment is always watchful and ready with the word in season, the cordial friendliness and the helpful hand if need be, to help bear the burden.

There are various kinds of burdens to be borne: there are burdens of bereavement, of financial embarrassment, of business and family cares, of physical and mental suffering, of sudden disasters and great perplexities and anxieties; and there are burdens also of conscious sins. In all these, if we are diligently seeking to fulfil the law of Christ, we may be able to cheer and strengthen fellow-members of the body of Christ with sympathy and counsel, and such aid as may be most needful and timely.

But the Apostle calls particular attention to this last kind of burdens—burdens of sins—and counsels the exercise of this disposition specially in cases of acknowledged sin. We are all to remember our own liability to sin, and therefore to be patient and considerate with others when they are overtaken in a fault. Such patient, forbearing love is one of the most beautiful adornments of the Christian character.

In the body of Christ the various members have their various inherited weaknesses, against which they must wage a lifelong warfare; and these weaknesses are sometimes of such a nature as to interfere to some extent with the rights and comforts of others as well as of themselves. And just here the Apostle offers a word of counsel, saying, "We, then, that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." (Rom. 15:1, 2.) This does not imply that we should not expostulate with such a one and endeavor to help him get rid of his infirmity. This we should do, in the spirit of meekness and kindness, while we patiently endure the trial of our patience, not seeking to please ourselves, but rather to help a weaker brother or sister. "Let every one of us," as the Apostle counsels, "please his neighbor [brother] **for his good, to edification"**—i.e., not by simply ignoring his fault as though you considered it all right, but, while kindly urging him to strive against it, still humbly and patiently submitting to the discomfort it brings to you.

If this spirit prevails, the Apostle further shows (1 Cor. 12:24-26), there need be no schism in the body; because the members all have a mutual care and a mutual love one for another—a care which seeks to encourage and strengthen all that is good and to discourage all that is unbecoming, and a love which throws its mantle over the deformity and endeavors to conceal a fault, rather than to expose the weaker brother to the reproach of others. Thus in the true body of Christ, which is knit together in love, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with him, in proportion as they are more or less directly associated with him; or, if one member be honored, all the members rejoice with him, and to some degree share the honor; just as when in an earthly family one member rises to honorable distinction all the members partake of the honor and the joy.

For such self-sacrificing love how necessary is the spirit of humility and gentleness and patience and faith! How forceful are the Master's words, "Except ye be converted [from the spirit of the world to the spirit of Christ] and become as little children [in meekness and teachableness], ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. 18:1-6.

And again says the Master, "Whoso shall receive one **such** little child [one such humble, teachable child of God] in my name receiveth me." Let us, therefore, be in haste to receive and to heartily fellowship every such one.

And here he adds a caution which all would do well to heed, saying, "But whosoever shall ensnare one of the least of these who believe in me, it would be better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were sunk in the depth of the sea." With what carefulness, then, should we regard one another.

Dearly beloved, bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ—the law of love; and so bind up the body of Christ that there be no schism in the body, but that it be more and more knit together in love. Let this blessed law of Christ rule more fully in all who have taken, by consecration, the name of Christ: and let its hallowed influence shine out upon the world, showing them how it brings peace and harmony and happiness—how it makes more tender and devoted wives, more noble and good and kind husbands, more loyal and loving children, more kind and good neighbors; and how it puts oil upon all the troubled waters of present experience and prepares the heart for the enjoyment of all the fruits of righteousness.

—Z. '05: 310-312.

Isaac and Rebecca

OUR REDEEMER is the antitype of Isaac—not we. He, alone and apart from us, was the heir of all things. We were strangers to him and afar off, like Rebecca, when Christ (Isaac) became Lord of all and was highly exalted and given a name above every name, and when in consequence he could say, "All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me." Ah, yes! "Of the people there was none with him."

It is since he is thus Lord of all, and our Lord, that we or any have received an invitation from the Father to become his bride and joint-heir. To us the spirit of truth declares, as Eliezer declared to Rebecca and her family concerning Isaac—His Father is very rich, and all that he hath he has given to his Son—"He is Lord of all" the estate, and fully his Father's representative, and the Father now seeketh for him a bride and joint-heir.

And as in the type certain gold ornaments were presented to Rebecca from the moment that she entertained the good tidings, so with us: from the moment that we first gave ear to the Father's invitation or "high-calling" we have been blessed. The ornaments, being of gold, symbolize divine blessings, gold always symbolizing divine things. The golden adornments were first, earrings, representing the blessed effect of hearing the call; and secondly, bracelets for the hands, representing the blessed effect of the divine call upon all our doings thereafter.

And so these blessings came merely from the attentive hearing of the high call; and yet greater blessings followed when we accepted that call and said that we would leave our father's house (the human nature) and our own people (earthly friendships) and go to our Espoused One. (Psa. 45: 9-11.) So in the type—when the decision was reached and Rebecca was "betrothed" or "espoused" to Isaac, whom having not seen she loved, the servant presented her with vessels of silver (symbolizing truths), and with further jewels or ornaments of gold (divine blessings and graces), and with new raiment, symbolizing her newness of life and relationship to the Father and the Son whose call she had accepted.—Gen. 24: 22, 53.

And as Rebecca's mother and brother also received some valuable presents from the servant of Abraham when she received her greater blessing, this symbolizes the fact that not only are the fully consecrated ones blessed when they leave all to accept the "high-calling," but others of the sympathizing ones of the household of faith (the justified, but not fully sanctified) also receive spiritual blessings through the betrothed class, even before the union with the Bridegroom. Z. '92: 100-101.

Honoring or Dishonoring The Head

"I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; that the head of the woman is the man; that the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying with his head covered dishonoreth his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head: for that is one and the same thing as though she were shaven. For if a woman be not covered let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

—1 Cor. 11: 3-6.

THERE is something about the above Scripture that seems to wound or hurt some of the Lord's dear flock. We greatly regret this, but the fact does not authorize us to change or modify the Scriptures. On the contrary, it implies to us that where there is a soreness of the heart against some regulation which the Lord has placed in his Word, some false ideas upon the subject resulting from wrong views and wrong practices of ourselves or others, there has been produced a condition of mind which, because of this very soreness, is indicated to be diseased. We have even known a few to be so sensitive, so tender, upon this subject that they felt embittered toward the author of Dawn Studies, Vol. VI., because he therein called attention to this Scripture and its evident meaning.

If we find any Scripture which touches us to the quick our attitude should be, not that of opposition to the Scripture nor of opposition to the one who drew it to our attention, but on the contrary we should be grateful that a weakness and sore spot of ours had been brought to our attention, thus enabling us to apply the correct remedies, which would salve the sores and make the Lord's yoke easy and his burdens light. It will not do to say that these were not the words of our Lord, but only those of his Apostle Saint Paul; for the Lord honored the twelve and their words and prayed a blessing upon us all through them—upon "all who would believe on him through their word." (John 17:20.) He declared furthermore that whatsoever they would bind on earth would be bound in heaven, and whatsoever they would loose on earth would be loosed in heaven—thus giving us to understand that their words would be guided with particularity, so that what they would enjoin we might understand would be a divine injunction, and what they would tell us respecting our liberties in Christ we might understand to be a divine message also. Furthermore we are to remember how greatly the Lord used those channels of blessing for the comfort and edification of his Church. We are to remember how they were specially given to him of the Father as he declares, "Thine they were and thou hast given them unto me, and I have lost none save the son of perdition"—Judas. We see that the Apostle Paul was the divine selection to fill the place vacated by Judas' deflection, and we see that in the Lord's providence through him God has sent to the Church the larger proportion of the New Testament message—the explanation of the divine plan as a whole. True, the words of our Lord and the words of the other apostles have brought blessing to the Church, but in number and in explicitness the words of St. Paul outrank all others. As we have seen, this is true of our Lord's words, because his preaching was before the descent of the holy Spirit, and hence was to those who were not Spirit-begotten and who were unable consequently to appreciate and understand spiritual things. Hence many of our Lord's deeper teachings were given in parables and dark sayings, and these evidently were but partly understood even by the twelve until after Pentecost.

We call attenion to this subject afresh, not by reason of any desire to make it more prominent than it already is—not because we wish to force the Apostle's words upon any, not because we wish to condemn any, but because we want to have the responsibility for these thoughts placed where it belongs, upon the Apostle and upon the holy Spirit back of him, and not upon the author of Scripture Studies. Whoever quarrels with the subject let him know with whom he is quarreling and be on his guard proportionately. **No one ever quarrels with the Lord to his advantage.** On the contrary, those who with meekness receive the engrafted word which is able to make them wise—these have the greater blessing. **The self-sufficient, and all who think themselves wise above what is written, are in a dangerous place.** They should understand that now is the trial time, and that humility is one of the tests which the Lord is applying to all of us. They should remember that our tests are not all the same, but that it is the Lord who by the various testimonies of his Word tries and proves those who have made a consecration to him—not with a view to their stumbling, but to their testing, and if rightly exercised to their greater blessing and advancement in the divine favor.

Let any who are disposed to dispute this Scripture read the entire context down to and including the 16th verse, in which the Apostle declares, "But if any man seemeth to be contentious we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." This is the Apostle's final word on the subject—the Lord's final word through the Apostle. In substance it means this: "I have set before you the truth on this subject, through obedience to which you will have a larger measure of the blessing of God not only in your families and in the assemblages of the Church but also in your own hearts and experiences. By following this course you will make better progress and be the surer of winning the great reward and hearing the Master's 'Well done.' Nevertheless, do not consider what I have said as a law; I am not giving it in that sense. I am giving it as an admonition, as something that will be for your benefit individually and collectively. If anyone is disposed to resent my presentation and to argue the question and to contend about the matter it would better be dropped. Let those who appreciate my advice follow it and reap the blessings; let those who do not appreciate it follow their own course in this matter—to themselves will be the disadvantage from which I fain would shield them. They will lose the blessing which I fain they would receive by following this advice."

The Apostle's advice respecting the covering and the uncovering of the head is a part of his general teaching respecting the relationship of the husband and the wife in the affairs of the home and of the Church. The man who covers his head in his devotions dishonors his head by showing that he does not appreciate the divine word on this matter. In the home in which the husband does not occupy the place of the head of the family, he is covering his headship; in the home where the woman does not recognize the headship of her husband she is dishonoring him and dishonoring herself in that she thus confesses that she has unwisely married a man whom she cannot esteem as she should—as the head of the home. If men and women professing godliness recognized this principle which the Apostle here enunciates it would, we believe, mean the solving of many domestic infelicities and difficulties; for the wife looking to her husband would thus throw upon him the greater weight of responsibility in the affairs of the home, and as soon as she got accustomed to this she would find a great relief to her own mind—a lessening of the nervous tension which is so wearing, especially upon women. The husband, realizing his situation and his responsibility as the head, should and we believe would generally be more careful than ever to look out for the interests of his wife, his children and all that come properly under his supervision—to not only provide for their temporal necessities, but also to realize an increasing measure of responsibility as respects their higher interests, mental, moral, spiritual. But let us remember that the Apostle has placed the responsibility of this question with each man and each woman in the Church of Christ, and has not made it a matter in which Brother A may criticize Brother B or Sister B, nor vice versa. To his own master each one of us stands or falls on this and on other similar questions. The more obedient we are the greater our blessing, the less obedient the slower our progress, seems to be the divine rule, and it is increasingly important to us to know this as we are approaching the consummation of this age and finishing our course.—Z. '07:360-361.

Siftings Typified

THERE has been considerable speculation respecting this account of the three times and places at which Elijah invited Elisha to part company with him: that Elijah was too modest to desire many witnesses of the final manifestation of God's favor toward him, or that he wished to spare Elisha the sadness of the later parting; but these suggestions are not satisfactory to us. To our mind these were a feature of the type whose antitype must be expected in this present time. As Elijah represented the consecrated ones who will as overcomers constitute the body of Christ and become participants with our Lord in the glories of the Kingdom in the first resurrection, so apparently Elisha would represent a consecrated class of this time, in some respects inferior. These will have an acquaintance with the Elijah class, will minister to them in various ways, yet not be identified with them as members of the same death-devoted company.

In harmony with this illustration or type we shall expect that, as the present age draws to its close and the Elijah class passes away entirely, there will come various siftings or testings to this class of inferior consecration to separate them from the company and fellowship of the Elijah class. Whoever will fall away in this sifting **will cease to belong to the ELISHA class.** Those who endure the siftings and testings will thus maintain their position in the Elisha class, and some will thus continue according to the type down to the very close of Elisha's experience, and will then in consequence of this faithfulness receive a great blessing—a double portion of the Elijah spirit.

As the two prophets went on Elijah said to Elisha, Make request what I shall give thee, as I go from thee shortly. Elisha's request for a double portion of the spirit of Elijah is not to be understood as meaning twice as much of God's power as Elijah possessed, for this would have constituted Elisha a prophet of double the power of Elijah. Besides, how unreasonable a request would it have been for him to make—that Elijah should give more than he himself possessed. We must understand him, therefore, to mean that if Elijah's spirit or power would in any wise be remaining with any prophets in the earth who would represent the Lord, that Elisha desired that he might have twice as much as any other one—not selfishly, we may assume, but that he appreciated Elijah's disposition and position as a servant of God, and desired that as far as possible he might enter into a similar work of service. His request was granted conditionally, but he was told that it would be dependent upon his own watchfulness.

The lesson which we draw from this request of Elisha and the conditions of its fulfilment is that the consecrated class whom he represents in the end of this age will need to be on the alert if they would discern the passing away of the Elijah class, and that only in proportion as they do discern the completion of the Elijah class and its passing into glory will they become the recipients of a proportionately large measure of the spirit and zeal of the Elijah class. From the Scriptures we get the thought that after the Elijah class shall have been completed, tested, proven and glorified, there will still remain a period of time before the full ending of the "present evil world" or dispensation—before the full inauguration of the Millennial glories. During that period the class which we believe Elisha represented —namely, a consecrated class, but lacking in some measure the full spirit of devotion exhibited by the Elijah class—will be quickened and energised by the change of dispensation and the evidences of the fulfilling of the divine plan, so that thereafter they will be practically as devoted and self-sacrificing and zealous every way as the Elijah class had been.

The receiving by Elisha of power from the departed Elijah seems to correspond in considerable measure to the "foolish virgins" getting their oil and being able to trim their lamps after the "wise virgins" have gone in to the wedding and the door is shut. As the foolish virgins were not evil but good —"virgins"—so Elisha was not an evil man but a good man and a prophet: as the foolish virgins lacked something that the wise virgins possessed, so Elisha lacked something of what Elijah possessed, and that lack, which was supplied to the foolish virgins in the oil, is represented in Elisha's case in the mantle and blessing.

As the Parable of the Virgins does not go on to show what happened to the foolish virgins except that they failed to enter into the marriage because the door was shut, so the Elisha picture merely shows that Elisha did not accompany Elijah, but on receiving his benediction and power he continued for a while the work that Elijah had been doing. So it is our thought that during the great time of trouble there will be a consecrated class who had not a sufficiency of zeal in self-sacrifice to be counted of the Lord as members of the Elijah class or body of Christ, who nevertheless will experience a great time of refreshing and become thoroughly devoted after they realize that the Church has been glorified—after they begin to see also the fulfilment of various Scriptures respecting Babylon. This class, whom we understand to be represented in the Scriptures as the "great company," whose number no man knows, who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, and eventually come up to spirit conditions, though not to be of the Royal Priesthood in the throne (Rev. 7:9-17)—these are represented as recognizing by and by that the little flock, the Bride class, the Elijah class, have passed beyond the vail and they are shown to rejoice accordingly, saying, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give glory to God, for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready!" This class in turn, though not worthy to be the Bride, the wife, is invited to participate in the great marriage feast which is to take place shortly after the glorification of the Church.—Rev. 19:7-9. Z. '04:252, 253.

Provoking One Another

"Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day drawing on."—Heb. 10:24, 25.

THE word "provoke" signifies to arouse or incite, or stimulate to activity. It is generally used in an evil sense, but is applicable, as in our text, to describe an incitement to good works, good thoughts, etc. The tendency of fallen human nature is toward things that are mean, selfish, groveling, and the natural bent is to incite or provoke or encourage similarly mean and unworthy thoughts, actions and words in others, and it has become a proverb that "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Everyone of experience knows this general tendency of evil to beget evil, and to corrupt and to pollute what is nobler and purer than itself; hence we have the Scriptural pronouncement, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Those who neglect this counsel need not be surprised if they are continually falling into temptation, and if the influence upon their own lives results in a measure at least of ungodliness and sin, and disfellowship from those things which are noble and true and pure. . . .

The Apostle intimates that, as "the Day" draws near there will be the more need for the observance of this instruction respecting the fellowship and communion of the Lord's people with each other. And experience proves this: the great Millennial Day which has already begun, chronologically, has brought with it new activities in mind and body, a greater pressure of business and rush to keep abreast of the times, and a correspondingly greater danger to the Lord's people of being choked with the cares of this life, or with the deceitfulness of riches, or the seeking of riches. We need a counteracting influence to offset this increasing influence of the world and its affairs upon us; and **this counteracting influence is to be sought and to be found by the Lord's people among themselves,**—communing one with the other and with the Lord, and exhorting and encouraging one another to steadfastness along the lines of instruction laid down in his Word.

And not only so, but we find that the beginning of this great Millennial Day is a "day of trouble." We find that the latter part of this day of trouble is to be upon the world, and that the Lord promised his Church that, if faithful, they shall be "accounted worthy to escape all those things coming upon the world." But we have found also that the forepart of this day of trouble, which is the time of preparation for the world's trouble ,will be a special time of peculiar trouble and trial, testing and sifting upon the Church: for—The judgments of this day "must begin with the house of God." We see this sifting and shaking in progress all about us in the nominal Church, **and still more intensely among those who occupy a still higher position and enlightenment through the knowledge of the Present Truth.** "The great day of his wrath [judgment, testing, sifting, first of the Church and afterward the nations] is come, and who shall be able to **stand?**" We hear the Apostle's exhortation, as he looked down prophetically to our day, saying, "Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, **that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day,** and having done all, to stand. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in exalted positions."—Eph. 6:13, 14.

It is "as we see the day **drawing on"** that we are to be the more diligent in assembling ourselves with those of like precious faith; the more earnest in exhorting and provoking to love and to good works, and thus to assist one another in putting on "the whole armor of God"—the graces of character, meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness, faith, truth, hope—that with these as the divine panoply or armor, protecting us from the assaults of the Adversary in this day, we may be able to stand. The clear intimation is that, unless we have on this armor, we will be unable to stand. And this armor includes more than mere head-knowledge, represented by the helmet; it includes, be it noted, the entire breastplate of righteousness, purity of heart, and it includes the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, and the sandals of consecration.

In the succeeding verse the Apostle mentions the possibility of wilful sin among the Lord's people, and what it would imply—the Second Death (the sorer punishment than the first death, in that it would be without hope)—"everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power."

While wilful sin has always been the same, it would not be unreasonable to infer from the Apostle's words that the temptations and dangers of "this evil day" in which we live will specially tend to trial along this line. Let it be clearly noticed that the Apostle is not speaking of sins of ignorance nor of accidental missteps by being overtaken in a fault, whose sin is not unto death, and from which the transgressors may be restored in a spirit of meekness. He is referring directly to full, complete sin—the sin upon which the full penalty is justly and properly to be recompensed. . . .

While holding up before the Church the dangers of sin, and the danger of falling away from **steadfastness** for Christ and to the principles of his righteousness, the Apostle encourages us to continue our fight against sin and its influence in ourselves and in others, "perfecting holiness in the reverence of the Lord." Accordingly he calls our minds back to our first love and first zeal—"the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction; partly whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and affliction, and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used." He would thus encourage the Lord's people to continue the good fight—to continue to wage warfare against the world, the flesh and the devil, and the spirit of these, especially each within himself, in the battlefield of his own soul. And he urges that faith in the Lord and the rewards which he shall grant by and by, when he shall be glorified in his saints, is very necessary to our endurance of hardness as good soldiers in the fight against evil, both within and without, saying, "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward"—"forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhort one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

And this reminds us of the words of the Lord, through the prophet Malachi (3:15-17): In the time when the proud are happy, and they that work wickedness are established in power and influence, and they that tempt God seem to be blessed—"then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another [sympathizing with and encouraging one another, so much the more]: and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him of them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name; and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." But while all should seek to provoke to love and to good works and to happy looks, we well know that the majority do the reverse. Hence, we suggest that the Lord's peculiar people may be so controlled by the Word and its spirit that they will be incited to good works, good deeds and good looks even by the most unfavorable conditions. Consider Stephen, confronted by those who afterward took his life: not only had he courage to preach to them, but his heart was so provoked to love and good works that his face shone with an angelic beauty. (Acts 6:15.) And the same grace abounding enabled him to pray for his murderers. (Acts 7:60.) Nothing could provoke such a spirit-filled saint to evil. Let us follow the example of such close followers of our Lord's footsteps.—Z. '07:313-315.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

Loyalty to the Lord, and faith in his promises, are costly. The Lord has so arranged the matter, to the intent that only those who are willing to pay the price may enjoy these blessings. Only the faithful and the obedient are willing to pay the price. Thus the Lord proves his people, separating the merely nominal believers from the true, selecting to himself his "jewels," his "peculiar people."
—Z. '05:313.

◆

The Lord's people are to live within their means, not only that they may have a provision ahead for the ordinary necessities of life, but also that they may be prepared to exercise the God-like qualities of benevolence and charity toward others in necessity. F. 598.

◆

We are not to hear and to obey every voice, but, as our Lord himself said, "My sheep hear my voice, . . . and they follow me." (Jno. 10:27.) There are many voices in the world (1 Cor. 14:11), some calling in one direction and some in another. The world calls us, the flesh calls us, the Adversary calls us, and the Master calls us. The Christian may readily enough discern the voices of the world and the flesh, and should be on his guard against their seductive influence. **But he may have more difficulty in discerning between the voice of the Adversary and the voice of the Good Shepherd;** because, the Adversary's method is to simulate, or counterfeit, the voice of the Shepherd.—Z. '03:85.

◆

Let us **STAND FAST,** therefore, in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free;—allowing no one to pen us up by human creeds;—**neither allowing any to lead us out beyond the bounds fixed for us by the Chief-Shepherd, into liberties, licenses and speculations that he never authorized.** Let us abide in Him, keeping ourselves in the love of God.
—Z. '03:38.

The fact is that when the heart gets soured, spiritual truths and harmonies lose their beauty—no amount of explaining will prove satisfactory.
—Z. '09:280.

◆

The more thorough our knowledge of the Lord, and the more intimate our acquaintance with him, the more secure we are in our own steadfastness.
—Z. '92:316.

◆

Herein is one of the distinct differences between those who are at heart the Lord's people and others. Imperfections and failures each one finds in himself continually, but those who are the Lord's true people feel so aggrieved at their failures that they are promptly led to the throne of grace that they may obtain mercy and find grace to help in future time of need, but others take their failures lightly and fail to profit by them accordingly.—Z. '04:234.

◆

"Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good." We commend these words to the Lord's faithful people. Whoever has a duty to perform let him not fear, and while seeking to do unpleasant tasks in a kindly manner, both justly and lovingly, let us fear not man, but rather fear the Lord and be intent on pleasing him. May the words of our mouths as well as the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer!—Z. '04:207.

◆

As we realize that in our temptations and trials th Lord is for us as He sees our earnest struggles and endeavors, it makes us the stronger in resistance another time. "He knows, and loves, and cares." Therefore we should never grow discouraged, but come to Him again and again, remembering that He is never weary of our coming and that He will not turn us away empty.—Z. '16:296.

"Trust in the Lord and do good and verily thou shalt be fed"—both physically and spiritually.

Give no heed to the wise who manifest their lack of humility in their boastful assurance that they have obtained special revelations. Remember that "He giveth grace to the humble." "Thou couldst have no power at all except as permitted of the Father," is still true of Satan and of all his unwitting servants. The Father's will we must not fear, but desire.—Z. '08:354.

◆

The righteous are bold as a lion, as well as gentle as a dove, and meek as a lamb. This peculiar combination should be found in every Christian, and we doubt if it will be found elsewhere.—Z. '02:45.

◆

It is not the great things that any of us do, or attempt to do, that the Lord highly esteems. The very small affairs of our lives, the very small sacrifices, the very small self-denials, that in the world's sight would be nothing, in the Master's sight will be great if they denote Love, devotion and self-sacrifice to the Lord and His cause.—Z. '14:251.

◆

God is thoroughly capable and willing to perform all of His part in connection with every matter; but it is to **our advantage** that He calls upon us to show our faith by our works—by our co-operation with Him in various ways.—Z. '16:297.

◆

We should recognize Divine providences and **look for them**. We should expect God's providential leadings in all of life's affairs. We should not pass through life with the thought that **we** are running this, or regulating that. As a child would look to his parent, or a pupil to his teacher, or as an apprentice to his master, or a maid to her mistress, so should **our eyes** be looking to the Lord asking His guidance.—Psalm 123:1, 2. Z. '16:37.

◆

"The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Other influences may lead to temporary and partial changes of course and action, but nothing else equals God's **revealed Truth** in producing a change—change of being, character, soul. It is because other converting agencies and powers are so often used (instead of this one which God has provided) that there are so many merely glossed-over, nominal Christians, as compared with the few whose entire beings are turned and fully consecrated to the Lord.—Z. '92:110.

◆

It is good **to meditate upon, to ponder,** the Word of the Lord; for only in so doing can we receive the nourishment it is designed to give. A hasty reading of the Scriptures and a quick return of the mind to other thoughts and pursuits makes a spiritual dyspeptic, incapable of assimilating the spirit of the truth and lacking the strength and power of mature and developed Christian character.—Z. '92:110.

◆

The Lord frequently called attention to the fact that we should be **persevering** in prayer. Perseverance is an essential quality in the sight of God. It includes patience, carefulness and interest. In short, it is related to every fruit of the Spirit which the Lord's people are to cultivate. **Patience** is good, but it needs **perseverance**. **Love** is good, but it needs **perseverance**.—Z. '14:182.

◆

Our will will be determined by God as loyal in proportion as it has been on the **alert to watch the mind and the body**, the tongue and everything pertaining to our conduct. Z. '14:185.

IF WE HAD BUT A DAY

We should fill the hours with the sweetest things,
If we had but a day;
We should drink alone at the purest springs
On our upward way;
We should love with a life-time's love in an hour,
If the hours were few;
We should sleep, not for dreams, but fresher power,
To be and to do.

We should hold our wearied or wayward wills
To the clearest light;
We should keep our eyes on the heavenly hills
If they lay in sight;
We should hush our murmurs of discontent
At a life's defeat;
We should take whatever a good God sent
With a trust complete.

We should waste no moment in weak regret,
If the days were but one,
If what we remember and what we forget
Went out with the sun;
We should be from our clamorous selves set free
To work and to pray;
To be what the Father would have us be,
If we had but a day.—Z. '95:157.

BARTERING THE TRUTH FOR POTTAGE

This matter of selling the Lord for money cannot be practised today in the same manner in which Judas practised it, yet we believe there is somewhat of the same ignoble spirit manifested by some in our day. It perhaps does not go to the same extent, but it is of the same kind, and who knows but that under favorable conditions it might be willing to go to the same length? We refer to some who are willing to sell the Truth for financial profit, for social advantage, for money; and others willing to sell the members of the Lord's body, as Judas sold the Head, for earthly advantage, to deliver one another up to evil, to assist in bringing evil, tribulation, adversity, reproaches, etc., upon the members of the body of Christ. Yet with each of these, as with Judas, there was a time when they were perfectly innocent of such base ingratitude and wicked designs; there was a time when neither self-love, nor money love, nor any other consideration would have moved them to do injury to members of the anointed body. Let us beware of the little things which, like a switch upon a railway, turn a train into an entirely different track, and may let us off far from the goal we at first desired to reach. We cannot be too careful in the way we meet the trials and testings of character which come to us daily, and whose determination means so much to us respecting the present and the future life.—Z. '04:150.

Helpful Thoughts From The Volumes

"The Lord allows the storms to press us more and more so that we will cry unto Him."—G. 205.

◆

Jehovah says that none of the words spoken through His servant Pastor Russell, shall wait any longer for fulfilment, but the things shall come as spoken.—G. 431.

◆

The tendency of the human mind is either toward anarchy on the one hand, or toward tight organization and bondage on the other. The divine arrangement, avoiding both of these extremes, marks out for the New Creation an organization simple in the extreme, and devoid of everything akin to bondage. —F. 234.

◆

Let us examine our hearts, our spirits, our minds, in the light of the testimony of the holy Spirit. Are we overcomers, according to this standard? The standard is that to be the Lord's we must be out of harmony with the world, in conflict with it—its aims, its hopes, its ambitions. The thought of conflict is contained in the expression, "overcometh the world." And we can readily see that no one can be an overcomer of the world who is in sympathy and affiliation with it, and its general spirit of selfishness, pride, ambition, etc. —E. 237-238.

◆

"Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor once at ease sit down:
Thine arduous work will not be done
Till thou hast gained thy crown.—C. 188.

◆

In view of its glorious termination, the opportunity to walk in this narrow way of self-sacrifice for the truth's sake is the grandest privilege that was ever offered to any creature.—C. 207.

◆

Caiaphas, a chief-priest of Fleshly Israel, was used as the agent of God to deliver a great lesson and prophecy only a few days before that system was cast off. (See John 11:50, 51, 55; 18:14.) But we have no intimation in the Scriptures, nor any reason for supposing, that God ever used or recognized that church-nation, its rulers and representatives, after it was cast off. And this same lesson should be recognized, here, in connection with Babylon. "C.," page 181.

◆

Who does not know that at least one-half the difficulties of life are traceable to unruly tongues; that hasty and impetuous words have involved wars costing millions of money and hundreds of thousands of lives; that they are also at the foundation of one-half the law-suits and more than one-half of the domestic troubles which have affected our race for the past six thousand years! The Apostle declares respecting the tongue, "Therewith bless (praise) we God, and therewith curse (injure, defame, blight) we men, made in the image of God. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." (Verse 9.) The Christian who merely has attained to the standard of not stealing from his neighbor, or not murdering him but who commits depredations upon that neighbor with his tongue—wounding or slaying or stealing his reputation, his good name—is a Christian who has made very little progress in the right way. "F.," pages 586-587.

◆

No sooner did selfish and ambitious designs find a lodgment in Satan's heart, than he began to measure the Lord by his own false standard, and to suppose that the Lord Jehovah was in all of his work merely carrying out ambitious and selfish designs. Thus it is that the wicked heart is always ready to impute evil to others, be they never so pure, honorable and benevolent. "F.," page 614.

◆

So many are confused in respect to God's providential dealings with the little flock. They see not that as special fiery and chilling processes are necessary to the tempering of the fine steel implement, so special fiery trials and chilling experiences are necessary to the preparation of those whom the Lord designs shortly to use as his special representatives and instruments in the great work of human restitution, etc. "F.," page 643.

◆

The minds, wisdom, characters of God's true people are full of manifestations of the shining upon them of the glorious Gospel of the Sun of Righteousness—full of the beauty of righteousness. The minds of God's saints are made as the diamond in its excelling hardness and sunlit radiance. "G.," page 384.

◆

Every one who comes to realize the liberty of the sons of God and full freedom from Babylon's bondage should expect to meet other attempts of the great adversary to bring him into other bondages, or to stumble him. The Lord permits these severe testings, that the class now sought may be manifested, and prepared for his service in the Kingdom of Glory.—C. 188.

◆

1916

The body is one, and has many members united in the one; and the nutriment supplied is carried to each member of the body for its nourishment and strengthening through or in conjunction with the other members. Thus the Lord intended to make his people interdependent upon each other, to the intent that there might be no schism in the body; and it is to this end that he has exhorted us through the Apostle not to neglect the assembling of ourselves together, but to remember that he is specially pleased to meet with the Ecclesia, the body, in every place, even if so small a number as "two or three be gathered together" in his name.—F. 259.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER THIRTY-FOUR

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"Go Ye Also Into the Vineyard"

Matthew 20:1-16.

"Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."—Matt. 19:30.

THE grapevine was honored of the Master, in that he used it in the parable to symbolize himself and the Church, saying, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches;" "My Father is the husbandman;" "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit;" "Every branch in me which beareth fruit he pruneth it that it may bring forth more fruit;" "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away."

The Parable of the Laborers, is in full accord with the foregoing, but shows the matter from a different standpoint. It shows how each one of the Lord's consecrated Church, each heir of the Messianic Kingdom shortly to be established, is privileged to be a colaborer with his Lord and Master, and with the Heavenly Father in the vineyard work—**tending the vine,** looking out for the injurious pests, keeping the soil in good condition, assisting every way in the production of **"much fruit"** and of fine quality. Evidently many Christian people do not appreciate the privilege of being laborers in the Church of Christ—"building one another up in the most holy faith" until we all come to the full stature of a man in the Anointed One. . . .

The things pertaining to God's Kingdom, in its future operation toward the world for a thousand years, will be openly manifested to every creature, shortly. But **now** it is appropriate, and is the Divine will, that these things should be known only to the Church, the consecrated, the spirit-begotten sons of God. Likewise there are important truths pertaining to the Kingdom class, the Church, which is being prepared to be the Bride of Christ and his joint-heir in the Kingdom. And these things are likewise intended to be comparatively secret—to be clearly and fully understood only by such as have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice. (Psalm 50:5.) "The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence him, and he will show them his Covenant." (Psalm 25:14.) All such in close sympathy with the Divine purposes will be anxious to serve the Lord, the Truth and the Brethren. And such from time to time will be specially sent into the Vineyard, and will be specially used of the Lord for the assistance of his consecrated people in various ways.—Z. '10:264-265.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Eastern friends will be glad to know that the next Convention will be at Alva, Okla., early in July. Further announcement will be made in the next issue of OLD CORN GEMS.—Sister H. L. Noah, 1006 Church Street, Alva, Okla., is Secretary of Convention.

Those who despise service, and long for release from all its restraints and its supposed dishonor, never made a greater mistake; for the only men and women worthy of remembrance when they have passed away are those who have faithfully and ably served their fellow-men. It is only such persons whose names come down through history covered with glory, while those who lived in selfish ease were long ago forgotten.—Z. '94:301.

◇

Let us ever keep in memory that a broken and contrite heart the Lord never despises, will never spurn. Therefore, into whatever difficulty any of the Lord's people of the New Creation may stumble, if they find themselves hungering for the Lord's fellowship and forgiveness, if they find their hearts contrite and broken, let them not despair, but remember that God has made a provision through the merit of Christ which enables him to accept and justify freely from all sin all that come unto him through Jesus—through faith in his blood. There is a sin unto death—a sin unto the Second Death—from which there will be no recovery, no resurrection; but those who have broken and contrite hearts on account of their sins may know that they have not committed "The sin unto death," for their condition of heart **proves** this, as the Apostle declares: "It is impossible to renew again unto **repentance"** any who have committed the sin unto death—wilful sinners against full light and knowledge. Let all, therefore, rejoice in the grace of our God, who is able through Christ, his accepted way, to save unto the uttermost all who come to him, laying aside sin and its desires.—Z. '03-383.

◇

The term "Patience" carries with it the thought of meek, uncomplaining endurance of suffering with humble resignation and perseverance. It is a trait which indicates strength and self-discipline. It cannot be predicated of inexperienced persons, but only of characters which have been subjected to trials of affliction, pain or loss; and it always shines brightest when manifested under the glowing heat of severe affliction. This trait takes a very prominent place in the galaxy of Christian virtues; for without it the heart would grow faint, the head weary; and the steps would soon falter along the narrow way in which the Church is called to walk. "In your patience possess ye your souls," said the Master, implying the danger of losing our souls, our existence, if we fail to cultivate this grace which is so very necessary to our continuance in well doing.—Z. '94:332.

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OLD CORN GEMS

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"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18:51.

Keeping the Lord's Commandments

Christians Have Three Commandments

CHRISTIANS—disciples or followers of Jesus—from amongst the Gentiles never were under the Mosaic Law given at Mount Sinai. They are received into God's family as sons under a different Covenant—the one which reads: "Gather My saints together unto Me," saith the Lord, "those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psalm 50:5.) Jesus, after keeping fully all the conditions and requirements of the Law Covenant, under which He was born, was permitted to respond to this Covenant of Sacrifice. He was first, the Chief, the Head of the Household of Saints who entered into this Covenant of Sacrifice with God—agreeing to sacrifice His earthly life and all its rights in the doing of the Father's will even unto death. It was His faithfulness in this that gained for Him the better resurrection to glory, honor and immortality—the Divine nature.

During this Gospel Age, some saintly ones have responded to the Lord's invitation to walk in Jesus' steps. Through the merit of His sacrifice, Jesus was privileged to be the Advocate with the Father on behalf of all this company called to be His Bride class and joint-heirs. He has imputed His merit to their sacrifice, thus making it complete and acceptable in the Father's sight. Each one of the followers of Jesus, energized by His spirit of devotion, not only **makes** the covenant, but **fulfils** it, with the assistance of his glorious Redeemer. Thus eventually they will come off through Him "more than conquerors," and be joint-heirs in the Kingdom.

To these the Apostle writes, "Ye are not under the Law, but under grace." These are not the Law Covenant, requiring of them absolute and perfect obedience to every item of the Jewish Law. They are under grace, or Divine favor, which does not require the fulfilment of the whole of the Law by them—a requirement which they could not fulfil. Instead, as the Apostle tells us, "the righteousness of the Law [its real requirement, the spirit of its requirement] is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." (Romans 8:4.) Thus, although not under the Law Covenant, the will of God, which was the spirit of the Jewish Law, is binding upon every Christian in proportion to his knowledge of it.

The Christian's First and Second Commands

Speaking of the spirit of the Law, applicable to angels, to the world of mankind and to Christians, Jesus declared it to be briefly comprehended in two commandments. The first of these is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, being and strength." The second is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Every Christian and every angel recognizes that Law and feels a responsibility to it to the extent of his ability; but neither angels nor Christians are under the Law Covenant—that covenant was made only with the nation of Israel.

Every follower of Jesus should realize that if he has enlisted under the banner of Divine righteousness and truth he has pledged his very life in this service as a soldier of the Cross. How then could he do less than his very best in loving and serving his heavenly Father with all his mind, being and strength? How could he decline the Divine requirement to love his neighbor as himself—to be kind, generous, not selfish? True, the New Creature may find difficulty in devoting all of his mind and strength to the Lord and in dealing in perfect fairness with all his fellow-creatures. But this is the New Creature's desire and intention, and to accomplish which he must strive daily, and war a good warfare against the natural inherited weaknesses of his old nature—his flesh. In proportion to his love for the Lord will be his zeal in this warfare; and proportionate also will be the reward that will be given him in the end by the Heavenly Father.

But what an unseen warfare is being waged amongst the followers of the Lord wherever they are! The world sees not and knows not of this conflict; but it is very real, and the Lord takes note of the loyalty and faithfulness of these convenantors—these who have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice—consecrating their little all of time, talent, influence, propects. Having consecrated, they are to maintain this attitude of consecration daily, hourly—presenting their bodies "living sacrifices, holy acceptable to God, and their reasonable service.—Rom. 12:1.

If weak or fallen according to the flesh, these are to remember that they are no longer fleshly or human beings, and that the weaknesses are not theirs; for they are now New Creatures in Christ Jesus, to whom old things have passed away and all things have become new. They have new ambitions, new ideals, and new relationship with God. They do not love sin, but love righteousness. They hate sin. They have enlisted to death to war a warfare against sin, especially in their own flesh. They have the satisfaction of knowing that while fellowmen might not see their battlings, might not know of the courageous effort they put forth in opposition to sin, yet the Lord looketh not at the outward man, but at the heart, and His judgment is not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit—the mind, the intention, the endeavor. Thus there are some great, valiant soldiers of the Cross, whom the world knows not; but all of these will eventually be crowned and have a share with Jesus in His Kingdom.

The Christian's Third Commandment

At first it would appear that these two commandments itemized by Jesus would include everything that could be required by justice; and so they do. Justice requires nothing more than what these two commands include. Why then did Jesus give another command—a third one— a new one, over and above anything that the Divine Law required? We reply that this third commandment is not applicable to any except those who become the disciples of Jesus. This third commandment the Father did not put upon Jesus; He voluntarily put this regulation upon Himself, and laid down His life sacrificially—a thing which no law could justly demand. The Father did not require that Jesus should do this in the sense of commanding Him to do it; but He did require it in the sense that He promised glory, honor, immortality, the Divine nature and the Messianic Kingdom to the saintly One who would enter the Covenant of Sacrifice.

Jesus, therefore, in entering this Covenant of Sacrifice, did more than what the Law given to Israel required. Therefore, when pointing out to His disciples the conditions upon which He would be their Advocate, and the conditions upon which He would guarantee to them a share with Himself in the Heavenly things, He specified the importance of this third commandment. "A new commandment I give unto you—that ye love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12.) St. Paul points out that Christ loved us to the extent of dying for us, and that all of the true followers of Jesus, possessed of His Spirit, should likewise count it a joy to be permitted to lay down their lives in the service of the brethren. "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Gradually the eyes of our understanding have been opening wider and wider to see the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God; and as a result we have been striving more and more to love and to serve our God with all our heart, mind, being, strength. More and more, also, we have learned to appreciate the necessity for dealing justly and kindly with the members of our families, with our neighbors, with all mankind —loving our neighbors as ourselves. We may have congratulated ourselves on the progress we have been making, and surely we all need some encouragements while battling with the old nature!

The Source of Our Severest Trials

But now, behold the New Commandment, requiring a still greater devotion to the will of our Heavenly Father and to the leadership of our Savior! The rule of righteousness is to be observed toward our Heavenly Father and toward all our neighbors; but toward the brethren of the Household of Faith we are to do more than the right—we are to suffer, we are to sacrifice on their behalf, in their interests. "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." Oh, what a searching proposition this Covenant of Sacrifice is! How strange that it should be on behalf of the BRETHREN that we should be expected to sacrifice, to lay down our lives!

At first some one might say, "To sacrifice will be a very easy matter when it is done in the interests of the brethren, more so than if done for the world." However, experience shows that many of God's dear people, striving to keep the first two commandments find it more easy to sacrifice time, influence and strength in the service of the world than in the service of the brethren. Somehow we are inclined to expect more from the brethren than from others, and inclined to make less allowance for weaknesses in the brethren than in others. There seems to be no condition in which God's people are more tried as respects their spiritual graces than by one another with one another. It is not merely theory; it proves itself out.

All over the world there are Class troubles. Truly we read, "the Lord will judge His people," and again, "the Lord your God proveth you"! Testing and siftings are coming on and many of the dear saints of the Lord who have made a Covenant of Sacrifice with Him do not seem to realize that these Class troubles amongst the brethren are means which the Lord permits to test and to demonstrate the characters of His people—their love for Him, His Word, His will, their justice to all men, doing unto others as they would that they should do to them, and, finally, their spirit of self-sacrifice in respect to what they will do for or bear from the brethren in laying down their lives for them.

Exhortations to Brotherly Love

We fear greatly that some of the Lord's saints, failing to appreciate the situation, are failing to be overcomers in these matters; and that their place in the Royal Priesthood may thus be endangered. We are not rebuking any; we are not finding fault with any. But we encourage all to remember the Covenant of Sacrifice into which we have entered as represented in the Third Commandment—that we love one another as the Master loved us—even to the extent of dying for us.

If this matter could be rightly appreciated, if more loving sympathy could be felt one for the other, we would not be inclined to impute evil motives to each other's words and conduct. Rather we would be glad to assume that they were sincere, whether we could agree fully with all their doings and proposals or not. And being full of love for the brethren, our refusal to join with them in what we consider unwise or unscriptural arrangements would be presented in such kind and considerate, sympathetic and gentle terms as would be helpful to them.

Therefore, let us each strive to judge himself, and not to condemn one another. Let us each scrutinize our motives in respect to every **action**, every **word** of life, and especially in all of our **dealings** with the brethren. Let us each assume that the others of the class are as loving and as loyal to the Lord as ourself. Let us each remember that it is a privilege to sacrifice our own preferences and conveniences in favor of the preferences and conveniences of others of the brethren, wherever positive principles would not thereby be infringed; and we may even sacrifice positive principles of justice as respects **our own** interests, if thereby the peace, fellowship and prosperity of the brethren will be conserved.

And even if, despite our every endeavor to the contrary, it should finally seem necessary for a class to divide, nevertheless **love for the brethren** ought to be the blessed tie that binds, no matter how much the conveniences of the class or other reasons might make it necessary for us to subdivide. "Love as brethren" ought to love. "Be kind, considerate, gentle, one toward another, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."—Ephesians 4:32.

"Hereby We may Know"

It seems remarkable that the Apostle, in pointing out one of the surest signs by which the Lord's people may know positively that they have been begotten of the Holy Spirit, says: "Hereby we know that we have passed from death unto life, **because we love the brethren.**" (1 John 3:14.) How strange that love of the brethren should be the crucial test, as we have already pointed out in the **Studies in the Scriptures**—and as we may seriously fear will be more and more manifest as we come down toward the consummation of our hope!

As the Apostle has said, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." (1 John 3:18.) This is a **personal matter** Each one of us is under this testing. If not yet, sooner or later, **undoubtedly**, this willingness to sacrifice in the interests of the brethren will **prove each one of us** either **loyal, faithful** to our covenant, or **contrariwise**—unfaithful. Let us make this matter of love for the brethren and laying down of our lives for the brethren a matter of personal study and of practical application to our own hearts, minds, thoughts, words, actions. And let us pray for one another, as well as exhort one another along these lines, striving to be filled with our Master's Spirit.—Z. '16:259-261.

Full Assurance of Faith

Psalm 23:6.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

SAINT PAUL speaks of the full assurance of hope and of full assurance of faith, as being the proper conditions for the Lord's people. (Heb. 6:11; 10:22.) And this is the thought expressed by the Prophet, in our text—full confidence that he who has begun a good work in us is both able and willing to complete it (Phil. 1:6.) But how few Christians, comparatively, have this full assurance of faith; how few can say, Surely, undoubtedly, goodness and mercy shall follow me henceforth through life, and by God's grace I ultimately shall gain the heavenly Kingdom and the glorious things which God has promised to them that love him! The few who can enter fully into sympathy with the Apostle and Prophet in these expressions have therein a great joy, a great blessing, a great rest of heart which others do not possess. Let us therefore inquire why it is that the number who thus enter into the rest of faith is so small. What are the hindrances to the others, and how can those hindrances be removed, that a larger number of the Lord's people may enjoy their patrimony?

The hindrances are of two kinds: (1) Many who are on the Lord's side, and who have been greatly blessed of him, and who have made considerable progress in the knowledge of the truth, and who are trusting in the merit of the Lord Jesus' sacrifice as the only hope of a future life, and who are thus justified, have nevertheless failed to take the second step necessary to their full induction into sonship in God's family and into joint-heirship with Christ to all the exceeding great and precious promises which extend only to those who become his sons. This step, essential to becoming sons and joint-heirs, is the purpose of full consecration —the FULL SURRENDER of our own wills, including all the aims and objects and purposes of life, and including also ALL that we have in the way of time, influence, means, reputation, etc. . . .

(2) But amongst those who are real Christians, and who have made a full covenant of sacrifice unto the Lord, we find many who say, and more who think it without saying,—"O that I could feel sure

that God's goodness and mercy would continue with me all the days of my life, and that I should attain unto his Kingdom! O that I might have a full assurance of faith, a full assurance that I am accepted of the Lord, and that by his grace I shall ultimately be an overcomer!" What is the difficulty with this class? Why is it that these do not possess this full assurance of faith? We answer, that their difficulty is a lack of faith in God, and **such a lack of faith is not pleasing to God, for "without faith it is impossible to please God."** Such a lack of faith, moreover, is a constant hindrance to their overcoming, as it is written, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." The Christian who has not the shield of faith, and a large one, is continually at disadvantage before the Adversary.—Heb. 11:6; 1 John 5:4.

What must be done to overcome this lack of faith, and to have an increase of faith? We answer, that like the apostles of old he should pray, "Lord, increase our faith." And then, acting in harmony with this prayer, each should **cultivate** faith in his own heart: (a) by refreshing his memory continually with the divine promises, becoming very familiar with these in the Father's Word. (b) He should seek more and more to remember that having made his covenant with the Lord these promises are his, and in his heart and with his lips he should claim them as his before the Lord in prayer with thanksgiving. He should claim them as his in his own thoughts, and in his conferences on holy things with the brethren.

When trials or difficulties or perplexities arise, he should think of these promises, remembering that they **belong** to him—because God has promised them to such as love him,—who have made a covenant by self-sacrifice. (Psa. 50:5; Mal. 3:17.) He should resolve henceforth to trust the word of the heavenly Father implicitly. Thus, if some seeming accident befall him, let him call to his mind the promise that "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose," and assure himself that the seeming accident would not have occurred had God not seen a way to make it the channel of a needed lesson or blessing. Let him refresh his mind with the thought that he comes under the provisions of this promise because he loves the Lord, and so loved him as to make a full consecration of himself to him; thus he is assured that this promise was intended for him.

Let such also remember the language of the Apostle, that if God loved us while we were yet sinners, so that he provided for us the great salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord, much more does he love us now, since we have been justified through faith in the great atonement, and have made a full consecration of our selves to him, and thus come under the terms of adoption into his family. Let him remember too, that he who has begun the good work changes never, and that if our hearts are still in harmony with him, if our faith is still clear and firm in the great atonement, if our consecration is still full and complete, so that we seek not our own wills but his will to be done in our affairs, then we may indeed have the full assurance of faith, because knowing that God is unchangeable, and knowing that we are still in line with his promises and arrangements, we know that all of his gracious providences are still being exercised on our behalf. This is full assurance of faith—full confidence in the Lord.

(3) It is possible, however, for the true Christian who has taken the step of justification and the step of consecration and adoption into God's family, and who has had the blessing of full assurance of faith—it is possible for such to lose this, if he become overcharged with the cares of this life, cold and indifferent as respects the Lord, his Kingdom, his brethren, his cause, etc. Such, of course, should not have a full assurance of faith; God does not intend it for them, but rather intends that if we leave the proper consecrated attitude we should also lose the joys and consolations which belong to it. And this is not merely as a retribution or punishment, but designed specially to awaken us to a realization of what we are losing, to the intent that such as have "lost their first love" may be revived, may renew their consecration vows, and thus return to the Lord, who will abundantly pardon, and restore unto them the joys of his salvation.

So then, reviewing our text, we say that this assurance of faith that God's goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives, and that we shall ultimately by his grace attain to the Kingdom, is for the class mentioned in this Psalm, viz., the Lord's sheep—those who are following him, and who are having the experiences outlined in this Psalm. One of these experiences is that following the Shepherd they are not left to hunger and thirst, but are bountifully supplied in the green pastures and by the still waters of the truth. Moreover, it applies to those who experience the Shepherd's care, his rod and staff, correcting, reproving or guiding them. Such sheep as learn to love and have confidence in the Shepherd and in his guidance, and to take comfort and blessing out of all the afflictions and trials of life which may be permitted to come upon them, realizing that they are providential, and for their blessing—such continue to follow the Shepherd; continue to have the experiences of sheep, and may rejoice with full assurance of faith and that he who began the good work of shepherding them and leading them out from the by-ways of sin and of selfishness into the full blessing of the heavenly Father, will continue this work and complete it, if they abide in him.—John 15:4-6. —Z. '00:169-171.

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Loyalty to God means that we shall remember that He has undertaken the supervision of His Church's affairs, and that He is competent for all that He has undertaken. Consequently, the loyal and obedient must be careful how they undertake to be or to do, to make or to break, anything connected with the work of the Lord. They are more and more to expect and look for Divine leadings in all of their affairs, and equally in the affairs of the Church of Christ.—Z. '13:200.

Thou Hast the Words of Eternal Life

— John 6:66-68.—

"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

"Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

THERE is just a tinge of disappointment in our Master's words here recorded—"Will ye also go away?" Accustomed to look for a reason for every action and word, we require. Why did the loss of a number of followers make our Lord feel sad? Was he ambitious for a large following? Did his confidence rest in numbers? Did he say to himself, Now what will the Pharisees say when after three years of my teaching they see me deserted by many of my followers? Was it that he feared the deflection might curtail his revenues? No, it was none of these things; for he had already made himself of no reputation. He had already said to his disciples, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets." He had also the power by which two small fishes and three barley loaves could be made sufficient to feed five thousand people. And he already knew that his faithful followers were to be, in all, but a "little flock," and who of the multitude believed not.—Verse 64.

Why then, did his words express sadness at the loss of a number from his company? It was because he was true and noble and sympathetic, and loved his friends, and seeing the hour approaching when the Shepherd would be smitten and all the sheep be scattered (as it was afterward fulfilled when "all forsook him and fled"), the lonely sadness crept over him and found expression in the words, Will ye also go away? Love of sympathy, fellowship of friends, etc., are not weaknesses, but, on the contrary, are elements of a true character. But it would have shown weakness had our Lord allowed the turning back of his disciples to have influenced or swerved his course from the path of sacrifice marked out for him in the Father's plan. No such weakness ever manifested itself. On the contrary, but a few days after, when Peter who here spoke so nobly, attempted to dissuade our Lord from sacrifice, he promptly answered, Get thee behind me, adversary, thou savorest not the things of God, but of men.

The Apostle Peter's words, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," are full of meaning. He had known what it meant to seek God's favor and everlasting life through keeping the Law, and, like most of the Jews of the humbler class, had been discouraged, finding himself condemned both by the doctrines of the Pharisees and by his own conscience. Doubtless, also, he knew something of the various heathen philosophies respecting a future life; and, if so, he knew them to be merely human speculations or guesses.

But for three years he had known Jesus and heard his words on this subject of eternal life. His teaching was not speculative guessing as to what might be. "He taught them with authority, and not as the scribes." Nor did he teach them to hope for eternal life through the keeping of the Law (which they knew to be an impossibility). His teaching, on the contrary, was different from that of every other teacher. He taught them that he had come into the world, not to be served or honored and titled, but to serve men and to finally give his life a ransom or purchase-price for the forfeited lives of all who lost the right to life in Adam's trial and disobedience. (Matt. 20:28.) His teaching was that as a result of this ransom-sacrifice, which, by divine love and arrangement, he was about to give for all, all shall have the opportunity of everlasting life through obedience under the gracious terms of the New Covenant; and that to this end not only they, but also, "All that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and come forth, and they that hear [obey] shall live"—attain perfect life. (John 5:25, 28, 29.) Peter had heard this simple and beautiful gospel—this, the only real good tidings of everlasting life; he recognized Jesus as the Messiah sent of God to be the Life-giver to the world, the true light that shall ultimately lighten every man that cometh into the world. —John 1:9.

What wonder, then, in view of this, that Peter answered as he did, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Peter's faith and hope had found in the doctrines of Christ a foundation and anchorage which they could not find elsewhere.

And the same is true of all intelligent believers to-day, in proportion as they have heard and understood the wonderful words of life, of which Christ's death is the central theme, the hub, whose spokes are the love and favor of God, including all his exceeding great and precious promises reaching to the circumference—everlasting life. Having once seen the truth, having once heard the good tidings—the words of everlasting life—for what would they exchange it? .. .. ..

Following the instructions of this same great Teacher, we are learning more and more about this eternal life which he has provided for all. As meat in due season he has taught us that this gift of eternal life is only for those that love him;—that a little flock of the ransomed world, called and proved worthy by their loving obedience during the Gospel age, are to be his joint-heirs in the glory, honor and immortality of the divine nature, and that he with these will in the next age, the Millennium, bless all the families of the earth with the knowledge of and opportunity to attain restitution to human perfection with everlasting life conditioned only upon faith and hearty obedience under the New Covenant, sealed with the blood of the ransom-sacrifice. This is the same gospel as of yore: these are the same words of everlasting life, only amplified and magnified as we get nearer to their grand consummation.

In the harvest of the Jewish age, it was after our Lord had spoken to his followers the "words of eternal life" that he permitted "offenses" to come to sift them as wheat, saying, "It must needs be that offenses come." Those trials came to **prove** which were ripe wheat and which chaff and undeveloped wheat. Two classes specially were sifted out—the merely curious and slightly interested class, and a consecrated class which had not much **depth of character,** represented in our Lord's parable (Matt. 13:5, 6, 20, 21) as the stony ground hearers, which received the message with joy, but not having depth of heart-soil and earnest love and consecration to the truth, when tribulation or persecution arose they were at once offended, and turned back and walked no more with the Lord and the faithful.

The same is true now. Blessed have been our eyes, for they have seen many of the "deep things" in the divine plan of the ages; and blessed have been our ears, for they have heard with wonderful clearness the lessons of the great Teacher—the words of glory, honor and immortality—words of eternal life. And now in the Lord's order we are to be ready for trials and siftings. Now, again, offenses must needs come to prove all, and to turn back those who are not consecrated and those who have no **depth** of character, who are unwilling to bear the reproaches and afflictions of the Christ. So it was with Gideon's typical army. All who shall be owned of the Lord as joint-heirs with Christ must be a select class, a peculiarly zealous people;—and no wonder: Marvel not therefore at the fiery trials which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. In fact, that is the very purpose of the permission of offenses and divisions: "that they which are approved [by God, because they endure the tests and **stand fast** in the truth] may be made **manifest** among you."—1 Cor. 11:18, 19.

Those who will stand the test here will be just life those for whom Peter spoke in the previous harvest testing. Should any feeling of faintness or discouragement come over them, they will also ask, "Lord to whom shall we go?" Looking about them they see the delusions of Spiritism and various doctrines of devils, and the blindness and contradictions of reason as well as of Scripture among agnostics, and in the various denominations of Christendom. The glance is sufficient for the class which the Lord desires to select. They **could** not go away, they could not be forced to leave the army of the Lord. **Truly, where should we go?** Our Leader, and he alone, has the words of eternal life. Since we have heard his words, all other gospels have lost their charm. We will abide with and follow the great Captain of our salvation: in his words and in his love and in his service we live and move and have our being as the elect of God.

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent Word.
What more can he say than to you he hath said,
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled."

—Z. '94:309-311.

A Thorn in the Flesh

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong."—2 Cor. 12:7-10.

THIS was the language of an overcoming saint, meekly bowing to the divine will. Noble and loyal and true and strong in character as the Apostle Paul was, he yet realized that he was a member of the fallen race, and, in common with all humanity, subject to frailties. God had called him to a most important and glorious work—that of bearing the gospel to the Gentiles; and, for the benefit of the whole Church, to him were granted special and wonderful revelations, even above all the other honored and beloved apostles. He was caught away in mental vision to the third heaven—the new dispensation, the Millennial reign of Christ, and shown things (doubtless the plan and purpose of God, as now made manifest to us, largely through his writings, but) not lawful to be uttered then, because not then due to the Church. (2 Cor. 12:4.) Upon him devolved the care of all the Churches of the Gentiles, and great were the responsibilities of his office. Though the position was a most laborious and trying one, requiring great fortitude, zeal, energy and self-denial to fill it, it was also one of great honor.

And Paul appreciated the honor of such intimate fellowship of service with the Lord, and manifested his appreciation by untiring zeal and enthusiasm. But even in this the Lord recognized a personal danger to his beloved and faithful Apostle—a danger of pride and self-exaltation, which, if it should develop, would soon unfit him for further service and rob him of his future reward.. So the thorn in the flesh was permitted to come. It came, not from the hand of the Lord, though by his permission; but, as the Apostle affirms, it was "the messenger of Satan to buffet" him.

A thorn in the flesh is always a painful thing; and whatever this may have been, it was something severely trying to Paul. At first he thought only of the pain and annoyance it caused him, and of its hindrance to him in the Lord's work: it was a messenger of Satan that he was anxious to get rid of. Three times he besought the Lord for its removal. But no, it had come to stay, and the Lord mercifully made him to realize that though it was very undesirable to the flesh, it was nevertheless profitable to him spiritually; for otherwise he might become exalted overmuch.

The implication of weakness the Apostle humbly accepted. He did not resent it and begin to boast of his strength and to reproach the Lord for not exerting his power for its removal; but, on the contrary, with grace and gladness he accepted the Lord's judgment of his heart, and his estimate of his strength, and appreciated the love that thus cared for him personally, while through him he was ministering to the whole Church. Yes, praise the Lord! he chooses his own instruments, and whets and grinds and polishes them for the more effectual service, and wields them with force and power in the service of his people; but in all the painful and laborious service he has special care also for the willing and faithful instrument. He will not suffer it to be tried beyond that which it is able to endure; nor will he suffer it to be exalted without some counterbalancing thorn in the flesh to preserve its equilibrium.

The answer to the Apostle's prayer, although not in accordance with his request, was a blessed consolation—"My grace [my favor] is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect [made manifest] in [your] weakness."

This is also the blessed consolation of every truly submissive heart. How many of the Lord's people are tempest-tossed and sorely tried in these days: and doubtless many of them have earnestly besought the Lord to remove this or that trial or affliction; but the piercing thorn still remains for their discipline and perfecting. Let all such, like Paul, give ear to the Master's voice—"My favor is sufficient for thee." What if other friends forsake thee, and hosts of foes seek to overwhelm thee, if thou hast my favor, my love: is not that sufficient? And what though the flesh be weak and the heart sometimes faint, my strength shall supply your lack; and while you walk in the way of my appointment, your weakness shall only the more manifest the power of God working in and through you.

What sincere child of God has not realized, in times of greatest need and felt weakness, the power of God on his behalf supplementing his weakness with strength from above? And when the task was accomplished to which the Lord had called him and for which he felt so incompetent of himself, has he not realized in the outcome the wonder-working power of God?

In view of such a gracious provision to supplement his weakness with divine strength, the faithful Apostle meekly responded, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Having put forth all his own energies and faithfully used his own ability to its fullest extent as a wise steward, it was his joy to recognize the hand of the Lord working with him—by miracles and signs and with demonstrations of the spirit and of power. (Heb. 2:4; Acts 19:11; 1 Cor. 2:4.) These demonstrations of divine power supplementing Paul's faithful use of his natural abilities were the Lord's endorsement of all he did—the manifestations of divine approval both to himself and to others, and consequently cause for great rejoicing.

With the Apostle it is also the privilege of all God's children to have their weakness supplemented by divine grace, while they meekly and faithfully use their talents in the Lord's service. And so all the faithful may rejoice in tribulations and infirmities, while God overrules the former and supplements the latter to his praise.

But to rejoice in tribulations, to endure meekly and patiently a sore thorn in the flesh, and even to glory in such personal infirmaties as make the power of Christ the more manifest, is not possible except to those whose hearts are in fullest accord with the loving purposes of God. If the heart be influenced by pride or ambition or love of fame or wealth or any worldly ambition, joy in tribulation is impossible. But if the old ambitions and desires of the flesh are kept under, and faith, love, hope and zeal are all alive and active, we shall have the consciousness of the divine favor, and then we can rejoice in every experience.—Z. '94:390-391.

The Dedication of the Temple

I Kings 8:1-11, 62, 63.

Golden Text: "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."—Psa. 122:1.

VERY interesting is the story of the great Temple of God purposed and largely prepared for by King David and built by King Solomon the wise. It was commenced in the fifth year of Solomon's reign and finished in the twelfth. The story of its cost seems fabulous, the gold and silver employed in its construction being estimated at from $1,000,000,000 to $2,500,000,000. We are inclined to think the smaller estimate nearer to the truth, or that the ancient standard of values, a talent, possibly, experienced a change of values, as for instance was the case in the English pound sterling, which originally meant a pound of silver in value but subsequently a quarter of a pound of silver, and to-day, by reason of the change of standard from silver to gold, it has a still different meaning not at all connected with silver. Similarly the Jewish talent may have experienced changes of value in the long centuries of its use. However, regardless of the aggregated value of the gold, silver, brass, precious stones, constituting the Temple, we have every reason to conclude that it was a wonderful structure for its day—one of which King Solomon in all his glory and wisdom, and the people of Israel with him, had good reason to rejoice and not feel ashamed.

The context shows that King Hiram of Phoenicia not only contributed largely to the Temple as a friendly gift, but also supplied skilled workmen under Solomon's pay, who in various ways assisted in the preparation of the brazen columns for the porch, utensils for the court, etc., etc., Thirty thousand Israelites were drafted to serve in the Temple construction one month out of each quarter. Besides these there would appear to have been 150,000 laborers, apparently foreigners, hired from outside

(1 Kings 5:13-16; 9:21, 22), or they may have been aliens residing in the land of Palestine—Canaanites. The overseers would appear to have been 550 chiefs and 3,300 subordinates, of whom 250 were Israelites, and 3,600 Canaanites. (2 Chron. 2:17; 8:10.) This preponderance of the Canaanites amongst the oversears seems to imply that the laborers were Canaanites, and also reminds us that "the Canaanite was still in the land." The fact that the Canaanites, strangers from the Commonwealth of Israel, were the chief laborers in the construction of the great Temple, seems to have been typical of the fact that aliens, strangers, foreigners, and **enemies of the Truth have the larger share in the work of preparing the antitypical Temple.** Their hammering, their chiseling, their melting and casting, under divine providence, serve to make ready the living stones and the glorious pillars for the spiritual house. Verily they know not what they do. Their work is greater, better, than they comprehend, as the glories of eternity will demonstrate.

The lesson opens with the Temple's construction finished, and the chiefs of Israel gathered with King Solomon at Jerusalem for its dedication, at the time we call October, corresponding to the Jewish New Year feast, held in conection with the great day of atonement. The Atonement Day was probably past, the sacrifices of atonement having been made in the Tabernacle and the blessing of the Lord, as usual, dispensed upon the people for the new year. While they were thus legally cleansed, reconciled to God typically, was the most appropriate time for the dedication of the Temple, which represented the spiritual hopes and aims of the nation.

The Ark, representing typically the divine covenant with Abraham, the fulfilment of which centered in the Christ, must be transferred from the Tabernacle to the Temple, that thus the latter might supersede the former as the meeting place between God and his covenant people. The thousands of sacrifices offered during the procession of the King and priests and the celebrities of the nation, besides evidencing their devotion to God and their willingness to sacrifice, had a typical significance as representing the consecration even unto death of the whole company thus engaged in transferring the emblem of their faith and hope. In some respects, therefore, the King and the chiefs of the nation represented typically our Lord Jesus and the overcomers, and the chief priests and under priests represented the same from another standpoint. The procession was the meeting place between the sacrificing emblems of the present age and the typical representation of the kingdom glories and honors of the next age. The Lord's people to-day seem to be following this type. The Great King, antitypical of Solomon, has about finished the Temple construction and has sent forth the invitation of the heads, the chiefs of spiritual Israel, to attend and share in the great dedication. These chiefs are not the great of this world, but the Lord's very elect. From the four quarters of the spiritual heavens they are gathering, **the procession has already commenced;** but as the Temple was not complete until the Ark, its most important part, was placed in position, so the glorious Temple will not really be finished until every member of the body of Christ has been changed from the Tabernacle condition to the Temple or permanent condition in the first resurrection.

The declaration that there was nothing in the Ark save the tables of stone on which was inscribed the Law, seems at first to be in conflict with the Apostle's statement in Heb. 9:4, where he mentions also the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded. We are to remember, however, that this description related to the Tabernacle and not to the Temple. The golden bowl of manna which did not corrupt was a type or illustration of the immortality or incorruptibility which the Lord has provided for the Royal Priesthood, and the budded rod was a reminder that the blessing and fruitfulness and privilege of service belong to the antitypical Levite, but as types both of these will end in the present dispensation. They met with the Tabernacle conditions; they will not be needed in the future conditions of glory, honor, and immortality represented by the Temple, because there the glorious things typified by these will have been fully entered into by the overcomers of the Church. But the law will still be an integral part of the divine covenant. As the Apostle explains the fulfilling of the law is love, and love never faileth. It will always be the divine requirement and essential to participation in any of the blessings connected with the divine favor represented in the Ark of the covenant.

While the priests proceeded with their work of placing the Ark, the Levites, "arrayed in white linen, having psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the [brazen] altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets. It came to pass that the trumpeters and singers were **as one,** to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voices with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord saying, 'For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever,' that then the house [Temple] was filled with the cloud"—the peculiar pillar of cloud which symbolized the Lord's presence through the wilderness journey, and subsequently in conection with the Tabernacle, and now in the Temple, for the first time rested upon it. This, which outwardly had the appearance of a cloud in the sanctuary on the mercy seat, represented an extreme brightness—so great that the priests could no longer remain in the Holy.

But meantime the King explained to the people the significance of the Temple, that it was the house of God and built under divine direction, given to himself and to his father David. Then standing near the altar of the court, spreading forth his hands toward heaven, he prayed a most beautiful prayer, and one which we recognize as prophetically directed, and as teaching us the purpose and object of the great antitypical Temple constructed by the antitypical Solomon. The literal Temple was to be the place toward which all the Israelites should look as God's dwelling place, the center of his power, authority, forgiveness and blessing and help in every time of need. So in due time, when the spiritual Temple shall have been constructed and dedicated and filled with divine power, it will be the center toward which all who would approach God shall look for help and assistance and blessing and forgiveness, toward which they shall make their prayers, and in which they shall realize the manifestation of divine power and blessing on their behalf.

After Solomon's dedicatory prayer was finished, the Lord openly manifested his favor toward the King and all the people by accepting their sacrifices with fire from heaven, as we read: "When Solomon had made an end of praying the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of Jehovah filled the house [the Temple] .. .. .. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down and the glory of the Lord was upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, 'for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever' "—probably joining with the Levites in singing Psalm 136.

Naturally and properly our chief interest centers in the antitypical Temple, the antitypical Solomon, the antitypical priests and antitypical people. There is a sense in which every member of the New Creation may be said to be individually a temple of the holy Spirit now, a sense in which every individual should build up his own faith and character from the divine promises and by compliance with the divine requirements, but this is not the larger antitypical view of the Temple. In its antitypical sense Solomon's Temple certainly represented the glorified Christ, head and body, built up of living stones, as the Apostle Peter explains. Under the supervision of the anointed the work of gathering the various stones for the Temple has been in progress throughout the Gospel age. As not any and every stone was taken for Solomon's Temple, but only those of specific dimensions and peculiar pattern, in accordance with the plan, so it is with the antitypical, the living, stones. Only a certain class are approached at all, and only those which being cut out are first roughly quarried out and found suitable in character and dimensions are tooled at all, and only those which under the tool yield proper results and become conformed to the intended pattern will ultimately find their place in the glorious Temple which our Lord as the great master-builder is constructing. As before intimated, this accounts for the fact that various agents, even Satan himself, may be used of the Lord as servants for the chiseling and polishing and fitting and preparing of these living stones for their future glorious position. Viewed in this light what a satisfaction may come from the trials and difficulties which all the Lord's people are sure to experience, and without some of which they would be justified in fearing that they are not sons but bastards. (Heb. 12:8.) Only those who have some such insight into the divine program can ever reach that position to which the Apostle Paul attained, who claimed that he could also rejoice in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience and patience experience and experience hope, which will not be put to shame, but which will be rewarded eventually in the glorious joint-heirship in the kingdom promised by our Lord to his faithful.—Z. '03:441-443.

Strong Characters in Contrast

I. Samuel 18:5-16

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."
—Psa. 46:1.

SAUL and David were both men of strong character, but the former neglected the divine word and counsel and undertook the management of his own affairs, while the latter accepted the Lord and his leadings and by faith sought to follow him. The results showed in both cases: Saul came to an ignominious end. David was prospered and exhibited a wisdom and strength of character quite beyond his times. We are not to forget in this connection that David's discreetness and obedience to the Lord kept him from the throne of Israel for years—years of trouble, privation and wandering, whereas the following of worldly methods might have led to much greater prosperity so far as outward appearances would be concerned. Nevertheless, we are to remember also that the nation of Israel had been adopted by the Lord as his chosen peculiar people, with whom he would deal, whose course he would supervise, and in respect to whose rulers he would decide. Neither are we to forget the great difference between the Jewish age, with the divine arrangements and regulations of the same, and this Christian or Gospel age, with its different regulations and its law of love, patient endurance and spiritual instead of carnal warfare. Those who consider the course of David and other faithful ones of the Jewish epoch to be patterns for the Church, the body of Christ, show thereby that they have a total misunderstanding of the divine Word on this matter. David's battles and victories and slaughters are figures illustrative of spiritual battles and victories on the part of the antitypical David, the Beloved,—head and body—the Christ.

Although Saul had already been notified by the Lord through the prophet Samuel that the kingdom should be taken from his family and given to a neighbor more worthy of the trust than he, more faithful to the Lord, nevertheless he had been given to understand that the kingdom might endure in his hands for a considerable time. We may assume, therefore, that Saul was on the lookout for one to rise to prominence who should ultimately become his successor,—although we have no reason to think that he understood that David had already been anointed to this position, for David's anointing was kept secret.

Saul, although appreciative of David's prowess, was, nevertheless, jealous of him because of the prominence to which his noble course brought him in the eyes of the people. This jealousy was accentuated as he heard the praises of David sung in grander terms than his own were lauded. Jealousy is always an evil quality—no part of the Lord's Spirit, the holy Spirit, but a strong ingredient in the spirit of evil. Hatred, envy, malice, strife, works of the flesh and devil, are all closely related to jealousy, and often spring from it. Saul should have resisted the envious suggestions which came to his mind: he should have allowed his mind to rise above all personalities and to rejoice most sincerely, most heartily, in the praises of his young general. Doubtless it was in part his remembrances of the Lord's declaration that he should be bereft of the kingdom that made him look with jealous eyes upon David from thenceforth.

Jealousy is one of the great foes that confront every Christian. It should be slain on sight as an enemy of God and man and of every good principle; and to the extent that its presence had defiled the heart even for a moment, a cleansing of the spirit of holiness and love should be invoked. Jealousy is not only a cruel monster of itself, but its poisonous fangs are almost certain to inflict pain and trouble upon others, as well as to bring general woe and, ultimately, destruction upon those who harbor it. Jealousy is sin in thought, wickedness in thought, and is very apt to lead speedily to sin and wickedness in action, the probable result being the defilement of men. The mind, if once poisoned with jealousy, can with great difficulty ever be cleansed from it entirely, so rapidly does it bring everything within its environment to its own color and character. This sin, when it is finished, if it is allowed to grow, if it is not routed, if it is not overcome, bringeth forth death. All of the Lord's followers should be on guard against this sin, and none need it more than those whom God has greatly honored as his mouthpieces or servants in any capacity. Had David and Saul not been in such high positions, jealousy and rivalry and enmity would have been comparatively impossible.

Under the circumstances we are not surprised to read (v. 10) that jealous Saul was troubled with an evil spirit—an evil disposition. Perhaps the language should be understood as meaning that an evil spirit—in the sense of a fallen spirit, a demon—troubled him. We certainly know that as love, patience, joy and peace are elements of the holy Spirit—God's disposition—so a spirit of hatred and jealousy is an evil spirit or disposition "from God," —that is, away from God, to the contrary of God. We may recognize the fact, too, that such an evil spirit as here took possession of Saul was not only a spirit far from God, or anything that he could approve, but we may even assume that, since Saul was God's anointed representative in the throne of Israel, the evil spirit could not have gained control over him without at least divine permission. As holy men of old were moved by the holy Spirit to speak and write matters of divine inditement, so men have been moved and are sometimes moved today by evil spirits to speak and write perverse things. This is the thought contained in the word "prophesied" in this verse. Saul spoke unwise things, improper things, spoke foolishly while he had his javelin in his hand. The spirit of evil was upon him, leading him to make a motion with his javelin as though he would do violence to his faithful and humble young general who, as a friend and companion, played for him upon the harp with a view to dispelling his melancholy. The word "cast" (v. 11) is a stronger one than is borne out by the original, which seems simply to signify a motion—although subsequently he did actually hurl the weapon.—I. Sam. 19: 10.

David seems to have been quite intrepid, fearless, and again and again exposed himself to Saul's power when the latter was under the influence of his melancholia. There is no mention of David's fear, for although he felt it to be propriety and duty to escape as he did, he seems to have had continually the memory of God's power for his preservation, and the fact that God had already anointed him to be the king in due time. Such faith and courage points a good lesson to all the members of the antitypical David. Nothing shall by any means hurt us. Things may interfere with our fleshly interests or comfort or course of affairs; but when we remember that we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, that it is as New Creatures that the Lord has promised us the Kingdom in his due time, we can realize that no outside influence can interfere with our real interests, our spiritual interests, nor hinder our attaining to the glories of the Kingdom which the Lord has promised to his faithful ones. Only our loss of confidence in the Lord and our unfaithfulness to him could separate us from his love and his promises.

Saul's jealousy of David was supported by his fear of him. Doubtless he wondered often that the fearless youth who attacked the lion should spare himself—even when he, Saul, had manifested openly his hatred and opposition toward him. He perceived that the Lord was with David and not with himself. David's presence became distasteful in the palace, and, as he could not be ignored, he was put into the army and various commissions given him in connection with the interests of the kingdom, Saul evidently hoping that through some indiscretion David would give an excuse for a turning of popular sentiment against him—perhaps hoping also that in some of the forays he would be wounded or killed. But the Spirit of the Lord, as the Apostle explains, is the "spirit of a sound mind," and in proportion as David trusted the Lord and was guided by that trust he was enabled to do his part with wisdom, winning the approval of the people and all the more the fear and awe of Saul.—Z. '03: 330, 331.

Throughout the Gospel age we may be sure that the affairs of God's Church have not been overlooked by him—that at all times during this age he has had the care of the interests of his people, and has raised up for them such helps and teachers as he saw best. Similarly, we may know that he still has the supervision of Zion's interests, as the Apostle declares, "God hath set in the body the various members as it hath pleased him." (1 Cor. 12:18.) If this thought were more in the mind of the Lord's faithful they would be more on the lookout to note the will of the Lord in respect to the affairs of the Church—whom he sets and where. —Z. '03:427.

Grow in Grace

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen"—2 Pet. 3:17, 18.

THERE is a touching tenderness in the epistles of the aged Apostle Peter to the household of faith, showing that, while he realized that the time of his departure was drawing nigh (2 Pet. 1:14; John 21:18, 19), his solicitude for the growth and development of the Church was increasing. Accordingly, he writes two general epistles, not so much to advance new truth, as to call to remembrance truths already learned and fully received (2 Pet. 1:12-15), and to counsel all to faithfulness and to growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the preceding verses he has been calling to mind some of these truths, and he recognizes the fact that those addressed are already established in them; but, in view of his knowledge that false teachers would arise to pervert the truth, he counsels special watchfulness against being led away from their present steadfastness by the error of the wicked. That this counsel of the Apostle has a special fitness to the Church in the last days, our days, and was evidently so designed by the Spirit of God, is clear from verse 3—"There shall come in the last days scoffers," etc.

Let us observe the manner in which the Apostle would have us guard against being led away by the error of the wicked. **Is it by a careful investigation of all the claims which every new false prophet that arises may intrude upon our attention, thus giving heed to every seducing spirit** (1 Tim. 4:1)? NO: that would be quite contrary to the teaching of "our beloved brother Paul," to whom Peter so affectionately refers, and whom he so fully endorses; for Paul had given no uncertain counsel on this subject; saying, "Shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a canker;" and "I entreat you, brethren, to mark those who are making factions and laying snares contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them; for they that are such are not in subjection to our anointed Lord, but to their own appetite [for honor and praise among men, as great teachers—1 Tim. 1:6,7]; and by kind and complimentary words they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. .. .. .. I wish you to be wise with respect to that which is good, and harmless with respect to that which is evil."—2 Tim. 2:16, 17; Rom. 16:17-19.

Peter felt the force of Paul's wise and earnest counsel, and with emphasis re-echoed the same sentiments. To give heed to such seducing doctrines, contrary to the doctrine which we have already received from the Lord and the apostles, argues a lack of faith in those doctrines. Such a one is not **established** in the faith. And indeed there are those—and such is the general sentiment among the teachers of false doctrine—who think that it is not either necessary or advisable to be established in the faith. To be established is to be a bigot, is the idea they advance. And so it is, if one is so unfair in mind as to accept and tenaciously hold that which he has never proved either by sound logic or Bible authority. But he is not an unreasoning bigot who, in simple faith, on the authority of God, accepts the Word of God. And such, and only such, as do so are established in the truth. The difference between the strong and steadfast Christian and a bigot is that the one is established in the truth, while the other is established in error. **The former knows the truth,** and the truth has made him free from all doubts and misgivings, and from all desire to delve into the muddy pool of human speculations. To all such Paul says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught [by us, the apostles], abounding therein with thanksgiving."—But, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."—Col. 2:6-8.

With these sentiments of "our beloved brother Paul," Peter's counsel is in fullest harmony, his advice being, **not to waste valuable time in investtigating "the errors of the wicked;"** but, on the contrary, to endeavor the more earnestly to "grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ," who is the way, the truth and the life.

But what is it to grow in grace? It is to grow in favor with the Lord through an intimate personal acquaintance and fellowship of spirit with him. . . .

To grow in grace and not grow in knowledge is impossible; for the very object of such communion is to build us up in a more perfect knowledge and acquaintance with the Lord—to bring us into closer fellowship with the divine plan, and to give us the privilege of being "workers together with him" in executing that plan. If, therefore, we love and obey the Lord and desire to grow in his favor, his written Word is our daily meditation and study; and thus we grow in knowledge: not, however, by finding out each year that what we learned last year was false, but by adding to what we learned last year, by putting on more and more of the armor of God until we realize its glorious completeness in the full discernment of the divine plan of the ages. We are then ready to do valiant service for the cause of truth in withstanding the encroachment of error (Eph. 6:10-13), being established, strengthened and settled in the faith (1 Pet. 5:10.) But **even to those thus established in the faith there is abundant opportunity to grow in knowledge**; for while they will see nothing new or different in outline or design, they will be continually charmed and cheered with newly discovered lines of harmony and beauty in the divine drawings of the wonderful plan of the ages. As pupils we may ever study the master workmanship of the Divine Architect,

"And still new beauties shall we see,
And still increasing light."

Our beloved brother Peter, zealous for our growth in knowledge, endeavors to inspire us thereto, by calling our attention to the wonderful events and the close proximity of the day of the Lord ;saying,—

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief [unobserved by the world], in the which the heavens [present ecclesiastical powers] shall pass away with a great noise [tumult and confusion], and the elements [the various parties and sects composing it, split and torn by discordant views] shall melt with fervent heat [the heat of public discussion and investigation]: the earth also [society as at present organized under civil and ecclesiastical authority] and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (destroyed, in the strife and friction caused by increasing knowledge combined with selfishness. This will not be a literal fire, but, as described by the prophets, the fire of divine jealousy—Zeph. 1.18; 3:8). (2 Pet. 3.10.) Already the noise and tumult, which shall thus eventuate in world-wide anarchy, are distinctly heard in every nation :.for the day of the Lord has indeed begun, and the heat of human passion is growing more and more intense daily, and the great time of trouble is very near.

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved [seeing that present arrangements and institutions shall all go down], what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens [the present ruling powers] shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with frevent heat?" Let us indeed lay to heart this solemn question, for we stand in the very presence of the Judge of all the earth. These words, while addressed to God's people eighteen centuries ago, and serving a purpose for good all along down this Gospel age, are specially meant by the spirit for us, who are living in this very Day of God.

"Nevertheless, we [we who have come into covenant relationship with the Lord—we, unlike the rest of the world, know of the divine plan and], according to his promise, look for new heavens [the Kingdom of God—to be established in power and great glory] and a new earth [a new organization of society under the rulership of Christ and his glorified bride, the Church] wherein dwelleth righteousness." Blessed assurance! how favored are we above the people of the world who have not this knowledge!

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (2 Pet. 3:11-14.) And Jude (24) reminds us that the Lord, in whose grace and knowledge Peter desires us to grow, "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Amen. —Z. '03: 199-201.

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How strong is the Lord, how wise and good! His promises have never failed to those that put their trust in him. We may feel that our efforts to be good and to do good are very unproductive, and that the opposition from within and without is very strong; but it is when we are weak—when we thus realize our own incompetency—that we may be "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." Let us endeavor to make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, and then lay hold of the Lord's strength to help us pursue our course in the narrow way of difficulty and trial. The fact that we are weak and lame does not separate us from the love and power of God; for "he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." He knows that we have the treasure of the new nature in earthen vessels, and therefore it is that, while we strive to overcome, we have his proffered sympathy and aid and the imputed righteousness of Christ for our all-sufficient covering.—Z. '95:166.

◆

The Apostle intimates that without full assurance of faith the child of God cannot come close to Him. Only those who trust the Father as a little child would trust its earthly parent, can have the courage and confidence which it is the privilege of all who are His to have, and without which we cannot have the perfect peace and rest of heart promised.—Z. '14:89.

Let the bride of Christ be diligent in making herself ready (Rev. 19:7), for the marriage of the Lamb is the event of the very near future.—Z. '92:233.

◆

Our Lord's promise is that he will not suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to endure. Let us hold fast our faith and our confidence in his sure word of promise—hold the truth in righteousness and faithfulness, and we shall not be of them who draw back and mind earthly things. —Z. '95:93.

◆

Wherever we find fear, trepidation, unrest, we may know that these are symptons of some spiritual malady; because whatever may be the outward disturbances, troubles, vexations, it is the privilege of those who are the Lord's to have the peace of God which passeth all understanding continually ruling in their hearts.—Z. '03:431.

◆

The promise that the gates of death should not prevail against the Lord's true Church has indeed been verified; for though assailed by the fiercest persecutions she has never yet been exterminated. Throughout the entire age down to its close in the present time the Lord has preserved a people; and his further promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age," has also been richly verified.—Z. '95:21.

While it is contrary to the will of the great Chief Shepherd that his sheep should be separated from **each other** by pens, and hindered from the proper liberties of the fold, there is, nevertheless, one general enclosure behind which all the **true sheep** will be found, and to which the Lord specially informs us that there is but the one **door**—himself. We assumed that all knew something about this one **fold** and its one **door**; but in this it seems we were mistaken. Some "wolves" are disappointed to find that the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the "sheep" has provided for them certain limitations beyond which they cannot go if they obey his voice (his Word), and beyond which they do not desire to go if they are truly his sheep. Let those who like call this true fold, with its well defined walls, a man-made pen;—those who enjoy its security, enjoy also its liberty. It has one and only one wall, great and high, which so far has kept out the "Wolves", except such as pretend to be sheep—who come arrayed in sheep's clothing. This wall is **faith in Christ's sacrifice** of himself as man's **ransom sacrifice**—finished at Calvary.—Z. '93:310-311.

◆

Can I truly affirm that I am
"All for Jesus, all for Jesus—
All my being's ransomed powers;
All my thoughts, and words, and doings,
All my days and all my hours?"

If so, then we are just narrow-minded enough to say, "This one thing I do; and I make everything else bend to this one thing of showing forth God's praises.—Z. '03:166.

◆

To those possessed of fewer or humbler talents than some others, and who are diligently and faithfully using such as they do possess, we would suggest that the time is not far distant when all the faithful will be crowned with the perfect abilities which will be common to all who shall become partakers of the divine nature. Meantime, each should use what talents he **has** to the best of his ability; assurred that the faithful over one or two talents will receive the same blessed plaudit as the faithful with five talents—"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—Z. '94:75.

◆

It is customary for the pendulum of thought to swing from one extreme to another, passing the central point of absolute truth. Indeed, we have every reason to believe that this is a part of the Adversary's method in blinding the minds of those who are seeking truth. He would lead as far away from absolute truth as possible either in one direction or the other.—Z. '03:67.

◆

Nor should it surprise us to be informed by God's Word that only a "few," a "little flock," will gain the prize to which many are called and for which many consecrate. Few are willing to "endure" a great fight of afflictions, partly whilst made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly as companions of those who are so abused for Christ's sake and his truth's sake. Heb. 10:32, 33,.—Z. '94:40.

"We have two ears and but one tongue, that we may hear much and talk little."—Z. '95:48.

◆

God is not pleased with those who are careless of his commands: he lets them take their own way as he permitted Saul to take his own way; but, however wise such a self-willed way may appear at the time, the end is sure to be disastrous so far as peace and fellowship with the Lord are concerned. Only those who are fully committed to the Lord and who love the Lord's will better than their own can expect to have fulfilled toward them the promise, "All things shall work together for good to them that love God."—Z. '03:351.

◆

The divine arrangement is full of order as well as full of liberty; and, rightly understood, liberty can best be conserved by order; and order best be maintained through a reasonable recognition of personal liberty. The mistake frequently made, not only by earthly law-givers and disciplinarians, but also in the Church of Christ, is along the line of extremes, either in one or the other of these directions. Some misunderstand liberty to mean lawlessness, disorder, unruliness. Others with equally good intentions, no doubt, are disposed to carry order and obedience to rules to such an extent as to dwarf the individual liberties of the flock. Great grace is needed along this line, to prevent friction amongst the Lord's people—to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bonds of love and peace. **We are not to have such false ideas of personal liberty as would ignore rules, law, order, in the assemblies of the Lord's people.**—Z. '03:23.

◆

The goodness and mercy of the Lord is not to be looked back to as a thing of the remote past, but is to be recognized and appreciated as a thing of the present. Day by day God's goodness and mercy follow us, refresh us, strengthen us, bless us.—Z. '03:414.

◆

He who resists the smallest temptation thereby strengthens his character that he may be able to withstand the greater ones. A good story is told which illustrates the wisdom of not entering into temptation. A man who desired to hire a coachman had a number of applicants for the position. They were ushered into his office, and he asked them, "How near could you drive to the edge of a precipice without danger of accident? One said he could drive within a foot without fear of falling over; another thought he could safely come within six inches of the edge; and so on. Finally, one man who listened in silence to the others, said, "I do not know how near to the edge of the precipice I could safely drive; but I do know that I would keep as far away from it as I possibly could." This man was given the position. This is the principle upon which we should act. **The one who keeps the farthest away from temptation is on the safe side.** Those who feel too confident of their own strength and power and go too near the danger line are liable to slip over the edge. Let us ever pray that we may not enter into temptation; let us also **watch** that we may keep out of danger.—Z. '13:85.

Let God's people trust him even while they see the waves of trouble coming closer and closer. God is both able and willing to make all things work for good to those who love him—the called ones according to his purpose. Rom. 8:28.—Z. '94:7.

Every error held obscures and hinders some truth; and we have come to a place where every child of God needs all the panoply of truth—the armor of God. He who has not on the whole armor of God is almost sure to fall into error in this evil day. Who shall be able to stand?—Z. '94:121.

Our Lord does not despise our feeblest efforts when prompted by warn, overflowing hearts—Z. '92:258.

To be established in the truth signifies that we have carefully studied and thoroughly proved it by "the law and the testimony" (Isa. 8:20), and that as a consequence we are convinced of its verity, so that our faith is steadfast and immovable: we know in whom we have believed; we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good; we have partaken of the sweets of fellowship with him; we have partaken of his spirit of meekness, faith and godliness to such an extent as to be led into a joyful realization of the fulness of his grace as manifested in the wonderful divine plan of the ages; and we have been permitted to see, not only the various features of that plan, but also the necessity and reasonableness of all its various measures in order to the full accomplishment of its glorious outcome in the fulness of the appointed times. This is what it is to be "established in the present truth." It is indeed a most blessed condition, bringing with it such peace and joy as the world can neither give nor take away.—Z. '93:294.

The chronology of the Bible is so thoroughly interwoven with its narrative that the two are bound up together as web and woof: to destroy the one destroys the other; to invalidate the one invalidates the other; to corroborate the one corroborates the other.—Z. '03:212.

Dearly beloved, let us fear least a promise being left us of entering into God's rest—into the rest of abiding faith in his way, his glorious plan—any of us should come short of it, and instead of calmly and confidently resting in God's way and in the blessed hope of its glorious outcome, we be left in confusion and doubt upon the whole subject. But if you have thus far stood firmly in the faith of God's way, we are persuaded better things; and if with the Psalmist you can say, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed" (Psa. 57:7): if your heart is established in love and reverence and faith in the sure Word of God, then with the Psalmist you may also say, "For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." (Psa. 18:28.) Yea, has it not been even so? Surely hitherto the Lord hath led us. The language of the prophet applies to all those humble and faithful ones whom the Lord has been leading—"For by thee I have run through a troop (of opposing enemies); and by my God have I leaped over a wall" (of bondage, into the glorious liberty of a son of God.) Psa. 18:29.—Z. '92:372.

The Psalmist has well expressed the present confidence and the grateful adoration of all the consecrated or sanctuary class, saying, (Psa. 73:24-26), "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth (the flesh is too weak and the heart too faint to pursue the course marked out for the righteous in this present evil day, except as strengthened and upheld by power from on high); but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.—Z. '93:233.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Prov. 4:23. The heart, which is the center and mainspring of physical life, is here used as a symbol of the affections—which are the center and mainspring of the moral nature. Keep the center of the affections right, true and pure, and the words and deeds and looks and plans emanating therefrom will be good, true and pure, even though not always perfect. On the contrary, unless the heart is thus fixed, all attempts to otherwise regulate the life will be measurably fruitless, and at best, only spasmodic. How necessary, then, if we would live consistent Christian lives, moving steadily on in the way of righteousness, that our affections should be centered in God, that our hearts should be as true to him as the mariner's needle to the pole.—Z. '93:233.

JUDGE NOT.

Judge not; the workings of the brain
And of the heart thou can'st not see;
What looks to thy dim eye a stain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scare, brought from some well-won field,
Where thou would'st only faint and yield.

The look, the air, that frets thy sight,
May be a token that below
The soul had closed in deadly fight
With some eternal, fiery foe,
Whose glance would scorch thy smiling grace,
And cast thee, shuddering, on thy face.

The fall thou darest to despise:
May be the angel's slackened hand
Has suffered it that he may rise
And take a firmer, surer stand;
Or, trusting less to earthy things,
May henceforth learn to use his wings.

And judge none lost; but wait and see,
With hopeful pity, not disdain;
The depth of the abyss may be
The measure of the height of pain
And love and glory that may raise
This soul to God in after days.

—Z. '93:117.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER THIRTY-FIVE

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Restitution Message Not Due to the World

The knowledge of restitution is granted to the Lord's consecrated people now, to the intent that they should not be in darkness with the world in respect to the divine plan, and especially in view of the approaching great time of trouble, and also in view of the falling of the systems of error, false doctrines, etc. It is necessary that the restitution should be recognized by God's people, in order to keep them from falling in this day of trouble. But the message or call to restitution is not **due to the world,** to our understanding, **in any sense of the word;** hence it is that the efforts being made in connection with the dissemination of present truth are confined, so far as seems reasonable and possible, to the Church—to those, at least, who professedly claim to be the Lord's people, **and not to the world.**

—Z. '00:237.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Vancouver Ecclesia extend a hearty invitation to all "Standfasts" to attend a local convention in O'Brien's Hall, corner of Homer and Hastings Streets, commencing Saturday evening, July 3rd, at 8 o'clock, and continuing Sunday and Monday, July 4th and 5th. Two light meals will be provided each day. Reception Committee will meet boats and trains. Please write Bro. G. H. Biddle, 816 12th Ave. W., Vancouver, B.C., Secretary of Convention.

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A series of conventions will be held in the East, as follows:—

Alva, Okla., July 2nd, 3rd and 4th. For further information please write Sister H. Noah, 1006 Church St., Alva., Okla., Secretary of Convention.

Kansas City, Mo., July 9th, 10th and 11th. Brother L. A. Smith, 436 Reserve Bank Building, Kansas City, Mo., Secretary of Convention.

Chicago, Ill., July 16th, 17th and 18th. Brother E. J. Morgan, 620 Cottage Row, Sycamore, Ill., Secretary of Convention.

Richfield, Wis., July 30th, 31st and August 1st. Brother Oscar Kuenzike, Colgate, Wis., Secretary of Convention.

Minneapolis, Minn., August 13th, 14th and 15th. Brother C. A. Hallberg, 4153 21st Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn., Secretary of Convention.

All Standfast Bible Students are heartily invited to attend these conventions. Brothers Palmer and Bartlett will be the speakers, possibly assisted by some of the local Elders.

Alas, that we must write it—there are few among God's professed children. VERY FEW even among those who profess to be entirely consecrated to and abiding in him, who have **his Word** abiding richly in them.—Z. '96:149.

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If so filled with the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, we like him, will desire to be as free as possible from entangling earthy affairs, and to have our time as free as possible for the Lord's service, and then to devote all energy, ability and effort to that service. To have the mind of Christ is indeed the one requirement of lawful striving—a mind which humbly and faithfully submits itself to the will of God as expressed in his great plan of the ages, and which devotes all energy to the accomplishment of his will because of an intelligent appreciation of the ends he has in view.—Z. '94:88.

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Any service rendered to God, his people, or his Word, which **costs the flesh something,** is a sacrifice, acceptable in God's sight through Christ. But a "**whole** burnt-offering, the giving of **all** that we have and are to the Lord, is most pleasing to him, and our reasonable service.—Z. '94:221.

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We must search the Scriptures to know what is the mind of the Lord, what He has **promised** and what He has **not** promised. The fully consecrated will not want anything which is not in fullest harmony with the will of Him we so love and adore, and who is so worthy of our love and loyalty. We must remember, too, that while we are praying with persistence and faith, the Lord is preparing for us, not only the blessing and opportunity of service which we desire, but He is also preparing the circumstances and conditions which will bring this blessing or opportunity in the best form. This will require our **waiting on the Lord,** which should be in perfect trust and patience for His good time to grant the desire of our hearts. "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." James 5:16, R.V. Z. '14:182.

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"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is love with us made perfect (completed) that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he (God) is, so are we in this world." As God is love, and is so manifested to all his creatures, so ought we to be love, and thus to shine as lights in the world. And if in this world we become living embodiments and representatives of love, we may be confident that at the end of our course we will stand approved before Him who seeks above all things to see in us this likeness to himself.—1 John 4:16-18. Z. '96:67.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER THIRTY-FIVE

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18: 51.

SPIRITUAL ACCOUNTS

"Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to usward: they can not be reckoned up in order unto thee; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered."
—Psalm 40: 5.

BUSINESS MEN are at great expense to secure accuracy in their accounts. Millions of dollars are spent every year in details of bookkeeping, an important part of which is to enable proprietors to know definitely upon which items of their business there is a profit, and upon which there is a loss,—to the intent that the profitable branches may be increased, and the unprofitable ones corrected. This is admittedly a wise procedure.

If the case be such with those who are seeking temporal wealth and its honors, how much more careful accounting should be attempted in connection with spiritual matters! The Lord's people are not merely seeking for wealth, which will last for a few years, and then must be parted with—at the tomb, if not sooner;—they are seeking for the riches which perish not, and which thieves do not break into and steal. More than this, with the heavenly riches they are assuredly seeking also heavenly honors and glories—even joint-heirship with the King of kings and Lord of lords, in the Millennial Kingdom, and in the glorious opportunities which it will bring in connection with the promised blessing of all the families of the earth. . . .

Let us see how our spiritual accounts stand.

We trust that each reader, as he takes a conscientious view of the situation, whichever way he feels that the balance stands (favorable or unfavorable), can nevertheless thank God that by his grace we are what we are, and where we are;—still his, with hearts striving for things of the spirit, and not for things of the flesh. . . . Let us look together at our text, and see if we cannot join heartily with the Prophet in the sentiment expressed. He divides the subject into two parts. (1) Thankfulness to God for his wonderful work of grace already done or accomplished: and (2) for his thoughts, his plans, his purposes, toward us, which are not yet accomplished, and which we have grasped by his promises, with our arms of faith.

Looking back at the things that God already has done for us, we see that the Prophet has defined some of these, saying, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." (Verse 2.) If we can apply this heartily to ourselves, what a cause it is for thankfulness. As we look about us, and see the whole world lying in the Wicked One, without God and having no real hope, —merely vague impressions—and when we look back and see how the Lord has delivered us from the horrible pit of condemnation and sin, how he has had mercy upon us and delivered us, and established our feet of faith upon the rock foundation, Christ and his redemptive work, well may we give thanks. Looking back we may see that happy day that fixed our choice upon our Saviour and our God, as being the time from which our goings have been established,—our course no longer vacillating. It was there that we obtained a fixed purpose, a ballast which has hindered us from being upset when tossed, hither and thither, by the varying winds of philosophy and human speculation. Praise God for this which he already has done for us! No wonder, as the Prophet proceeds to say, we realize that "He has put a new song into our mouth,—even praise unto our God." The new song is not one of doubt or of fear, nor concerning anguish of sinners; but a song of God's Justice and Mercy and Love,—reasonable and harmonious in its every cadence. Thank God! It has brought a new life to us; a new pleasure in life, as well as new aspirations and new hopes for others as well as for ourselves. We can never thank the Lord enough for the blessings which we have already received at his hands,—for the things which he has already done for us.

And yet the things that we already enjoy of the Lord's favor we are assured are but a foretaste of the blessings yet in reservation for them that love him—blessings which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to see or appreciate, but which God hath lovingly declared, and which we grasp by faith, seeing through a glass only obscurely, as yet, the glory, honor and immortality promised to the faithful. What we now have are not realities so much as promises and hopes. Present experiences being but the beginning of our comfort, we agree with the Prophet, that the number of God's favors cannot be reckoned, computed. We are exceedingly his debtors; we can never discharge the obligation. But then we are his children; he is pleased to **give** us these things, and his request in return is that we shall act toward him in such a manner as will betoken our gratitude, and that we are indeed his offspring, begotten of his spirit.

Let us proceed in our calculation of present assets, and let us not be content simply with generalities in the balance. Let us retrospectively scrutinize the privileges and mercies enjoyed, and the use we made of them and the blessings we derived. Let us carefully note which features of our daily course have been most helpful to us, and which have to any extent retarded our spiritual progress, hindered our fellowship with the Lord, prevented our running with patience or with best results the race set before us in the Gospel. These items will necessarily vary with each individual—for no two are alike in temperament or environment. Each in his counting should weigh the advantages derived from fellowship and communion with the Lord in prayer; and should determine whether or not this feature of his spiritual interests could be advantageously expanded.

Each should consider, also not merely how much time he had spent in **talking** to the Lord, but also how much time he had spent in **listening** to the Lord's voice—in searching the Scriptures; in seeking to know the divine mind, the divine plan, as it pertains to himself individually and to the Church and to the world. Included in this matter of listening to the Lord's voice, he should reckon the helps to Bible study provided by the Lord through the brethren, the members of the family, the members of the one body of Christ;—remembering the statement of the Apostle, that God himself had set the various members in the body as it hath pleased him; and that he set these members for the very purpose of blessing one another, edifying the Church, building it up in the most holy faith. True, we are to consider that the Apostles were set first, foremost, and hence, that their teachings are paramount; and that all other teachings are to be submitted to the test of harmony with the testimonies of the apostles and the prophets.

If any, on reckoning up, shall find that they have not made such good progress as they had hoped, or perhaps apparently less progress in the narrow way, than some others about them, let them consider to what extent this failure to progress was due to a **failure to use** the divinely appointed means for growth in grace and knowledge and love;—namely, the Word and the brotherhood. If the progress has not been so great as could be hoped, let another point be examined: see whether or not you have been as active as was possible in serving the truth. Consider that you have consecrated your entire life to the Lord, and that by his direction it is to be laid down, sacrificed, yielded up in the interest of his brethren, the Church. Consider, count, reckon, whether or not you have been faithful in this matter of laying down your life—faithful in serving the Church, the body of Christ, to the best of your ability. Remember that it is a part of the Lord's provision, that he who watereth shall himself be watered, that he who serves the truth to others may appropriate to himself the more abundantly at the Lord's table of grace and truth.

Examples of Proper Counting, Valuation, Etc.

In our counting let us take some hints and suggestions from the inspired apostles; let us note how they counted matters and things—which matters they set down to the profit account, and which to the loss account. Hearken to the Apostle Paul's words: "Neither count I my [earthly] life dear [precious, valuable] unto me." (Acts 20:24.) Again, "I count all things [earthly] but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." (Phil. 3:8.) Paul's estimation was not merely that the future glories were worthy of some loss in the present time, but that even the **knowledge** of Christ (including the knowledge of God's grace toward us through him, and the knowledge and consequent opportunities of running the race for the great prize)—was alone worth the price; he estimated that the loss of all things, in order to obtain this **knowledge** (and its opportunities), would be a great bargain. Let us thank God if we have this good asset—a knowledge of Christ,—a knowledge of his character, and a deep appreciation of it, a knowledge of the plan which centers in him —no matter what it has cost us of earthly good; if we have this knowledge, if to us he is precious, we are rich today, thank God! The same Apostle proceeds to say that already he had suffered the loss of all things and did "count them but dung," that he might "win Christ, and be found in him"—a member of his body.

A further suggestion as to how to count is found in the Apostle James' words, "Count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience," etc. (James 1:2.) No doubt, as each looks back, we see that there were numerous snares and temptations in our pathway. Over some, no doubt, we gained victories, readily; others perhaps we conquered with a severer struggle; and still others perhaps were only partial victories,—they were partially reverses, partially victories for our enemy.

What did these temptations bring us? What has been their value? One value, as the Apostle suggests, is the lesson of forbearance. They proved to us that we are still in the schooling time, in the testing time;—to demonstrate our loyalty to the Lord, and our worthiness, through his merit, to a share in his Kingdom. All wish frequently, no doubt, that the testings were all over, and that we were accepted to a place amongst the overcomers; but patience and faith and trust are to do a refining work in our hearts, making us mellow, willing and obedient to the Lord. Let the good work go on. Let us rejoice if our trials have brought us lessons of any kind that are profitable to us,—that have tended to make us stronger in character, more firm for truth and righteousness, more aware of our own weaknesses, and more on guard against the same. Even those conflicts which have resulted in only partial victories have possibly been to our advantage. Surely so, in proportion as we contended **earnestly** against our weaknesses or against the besetments of the Adversary. Even on points in which there may have been absolute failure, the result may be a strengthening of character, a crystallization of determination for greater zeal in that direction again; and a humility of heart before the Lord in prayer, which has caused us to remember the throne of grace afresh, and that thither we may flee in every moment of temptation and find the succor which we need.

The Apostle Paul summed up his account, and balanced it, as follows: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"—the faithful. (Rom. 8:18.) In our reckoning, in our account, let us similarly reckon the things which we have suffered, whether they be few or many, small or great—whatever we suffered for Christ's sake, for righteousness' sake, for the truth's sake,—let us rejoice therein, and endeavor to be so much more faithful in all these respects, that it may be our high privilege of suffering something further for the name of Christ, for his cause, and for his brethren.

As we reckon the profit and loss sides of the account, let us be thankful that amongst the shortcomings which all may have to deplore none of **us** find one item of evil which the Apostle mentions; **viz.**, none of **us** "count the blood of the covenant, wherewith we were sanctified, an unholy [ordinary] thing." Thank God, we still appreciate the precious blood of Christ; we still appreciate the fact that we are accepted, not in any merit or worthiness of our own, but in him who loved us and who bought us with his own precious blood. Oh, how much we have to be thankful for in this one feature of our experience, even if, as we look back, we find that there have been vacillations or slips or slidings in the pathway! How much we may thank the Lord, that by his grace we still are what we are, and still have the opportunity of persevering and running with renewed zeal and patience the race set before us,—looking unto Jesus for our example.

How the Lord Is Accounting Respecting Us

Finally, in our account of matters, let us take courage from the Lord's statement respecting how he counts things, and let us count accordingly. The Apostle said himself, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he **counted me faithful,** putting me into the ministry." (1 Tim. 1:12.) Ah, yes, what a blessed satisfaction it is to us to know that while the Lord knows of our every word and every deed he is pleased to count us something different, even from our words and our deeds—something better! Our words do not always represent the full sentiments of our hearts; our conduct does not come up to the standard: after the words have been spoken and after the deeds have been done—perhaps to the very best of our ability—we realize that they have come short of the glory of God, and short of our own ideals, desires and efforts. How consoling it is to us, then, to know that our imperfect work shall be acceptable through Christ to God; that the Lord **counts** us according to our intentions, according to our wills. Praise his name! We would have no hope of coming up to any standard of perfection which he would approve, were it not for his gracious arrangement by which our imperfections are covered by our Redeemer's perfection and sacrifice, and our works accepted according to the intentions and desires of our hearts.

The Apostle rejoiced that by the Lord's counting him according to his intentions, and not according to his deeds, he was counted worthy a place in the ministry. Let us similarly rejoice, and let us remember that the word "ministry" signifies service, and the word "minister" signifies servant. Let us remember that all of the Royal Priesthood, all of the truly consecrated Church of God, are ministers, servants of God and of each other. The Lord has put us all into the ministry; and there is a ministry, a service of kindness and of love toward the Lord, in honoring his name and declaring his righteousness; and a ministry toward the brethren, in opening the eyes of their understanding and enabling them to appreciate the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the Lord's character. A share in this ministry belongs to each one of us, and it is a great privilege. It is a ministry, or service which, if neglected, or in proportion as neglected, brings us corresponding loss in spiritual progress and character. Let us count this privilege a valuable asset, to carry over into the new year, to be used with greater diligence than ever in the service of our King.

The Apostle, in writing to the Church at Thessalonica (2 Thes. 1:5), says, "That ye may be **counted** worthy of the Kingdom for which ye also suffer." Ah, yes; this is more of the Lord's counting. We are not worthy of the Kingdom of God. No human being is worthy; but the Lord purposes to **count** his faithful ones worthy. He will do this through the merit of his own great atonement-sacrifice which permits the acceptance of our wills, our intentions, as instead of the perfect works of righteousness. Thank God for this generous accounting! Let it encourage us, and let us remember the Apostle's statement that those who will be counted of our Lord thus fit for the Kingdom, will be such as **suffer something for it.** Let us then strive in a reasonable, rational manner, according to the divine Word and plan, to suffer for the Kingdom's sake.

We are not to seek suffering in a foolish way, by doing foolish things. We have no such example in our Lord's case, nor in the case of the apostles. It is not even necessary that we should suffer martyrdom or physical persecution. Possibly the extent of our sufferings may be the wounding of our feelings, when—"The workers of iniquity . . . whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words, that they may shoot in secret at the innocent." (Psa. 64:3.) Perhaps our sufferings, even, will be still less than this, as the Apostle explains (Heb. 10:33-35): "Partly whilst ye were made a gazingstock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly whilst ye became **companions of them that were so used.**" Let us resolve to carry this good asset over into the new year, rejoicing that we have been privileged thus far to suffer some little for the Lord's sake and for the sake of the truth, and in companionship with the brethren: heeding the Apostle's words, "Cast not away, therefore, your **confidence,** which hath great recompense of reward." God wishes us to trust him according to his promises, and will reward such faith.

We conclude this exhortation to spiritual accounting, by calling attention to the Apostle's words: "We pray always for you—that God would count you worthy of this calling and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power." (2 Thess. 1:11.) This is our prayer for you, beloved in the Lord; and we trust also that this is your prayer for us. What more could we ask than that the Lord would count us worthy of the great high-calling of this Gospel age,—to joint-heirship with his Son in the Kingdom? We have his assurance respecting the terms on which he will count us worthy. We realize that the terms are very reasonable indeed, and that what we do sacrifice in conforming to those terms would be really only as loss and dross to us, so long as we were filled with a proper zeal for the Lord and his cause. And now notice the Apostle's words, that these good things which our heavenly Father has called us to receive—to prove ourselves worthy of receiving, according to his gracious terms in Christ—are not things which he offers us grudgingly, but things which he is well pleased to bestow. There was a time, perhaps, with each of us, when, under misinterpretations of the Lord's Word, we supposed that coldly and heartlessly, our Heavenly Father preferred not to give many blessings, and would give them to but few, and to them in a grudging manner, because impelled thereto by Jesus; and that for the great majority he had determined, beforehand, that they should be delivered over to devils for an eternity of misery. Thank God for a clearer opening of the eyes of our understanding, by which now we may know him as our Father, and appreciate to some extent his wonderful plan!

And, as respects our own share, let us settle it in our hearts that these gracious things to which we are called are **"all the good pleasure of his goodness."** Let us be of good courage, remembering that if God loved us while we were yet sinners, strangers, aliens, foreigners, much more does he now love us since we have come into relationship with him through Jesus Christ our Lord;—since we are seeking to walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit: since we are seeking to be copies of his dear Son, our Lord; since we have been begotten by his holy spirit. Truly, faith may confidently exclaim, "All things are ours, for we are Christ's and Christ is God's!"—Z. '02:131-134.

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The prize at the end of the race is his "Well done, good and faithful servant;" and to the faithful little flock "the crown of life" and the glory of the Kingdom. Therefore we are not running uncertainly, doubtfully, not knowing what the prize will be, for we are instructed by the Lord's own words.
—Z. '97:76.

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Although the New Creature, by the Lord's grace and strength, repeatedly masters the mortal body, nevertheless, **until death there can be no cessation of the conflict.**

"How goes the fight with thee?
The **life-long** battle 'gainst all evil things?
Thine no low strife, and thine no selfish aim;
It is the war of **giants** and of **kings!**

"Say not the fight is **long;**
'Tis but **one battle** and the **fight is o'er;**
No **second warfare** mars thy victory,
And the **one triumph** is for **evermore!**"
—Z. '13:104.

◆

Faith is the basis or substance out of which the living hope springs and grows naturally. Faith, then, must be a reasonable thing, well founded in that which is fixed, immovable, sure and steadfast, even in the word of God which liveth and abideth forever.—1 Peter 1:23. Z. '97:163.

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Where love rules the heart, even imperfectly, it commands that we think as little evil of one another as possible; and that we judge each other's **motives** generously, charitably; and if we love others as we love ourselves we will be careful to screen each other's imperfections from others, except where principles are involved. Love is the very essence of our Lord's spirit: and "if any man have not the spirit of Christ (to some measure and growingly), he is none of his." Let us therefore practice and acquire tongue bridling, not merely outwardly, and from "consideration for the feelings of fellow men," but as one of the necessary graces of the heart which if absent would prove that we are "none of his."
—Z. '95:177.

◆

Ezekiel first sees the Temple and then beholds the glory of the Lord entering the Temple through the eastern gate, and that gate closed after the Lord. This represents the closing of the door at the end of this age, as our Lord portrayed it in the parable of the ten virgins. The door will be shut, the glory of the Lord will have entered into the Temple. It is subsequent to this shutting of the door that the prophet is shown the issuing of the water from under the threshold. The lesson, therefore, is clear and explicit to the effect that not until the glory of the Lord shall have entered his Temple, not until the Church shall be glorified, not until that door shall be forever shut, will the water of life issue forth.—Z. '05:269.

God First—His Appointments

"Giving thanks unto the Father . . . who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son . . . He is the Head of the body the Church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence."
—Col. 1:12-18.

SCARCELY could we hope to find a more suitable motto for the Lord's people than, the words, "God First." A thorough devotion to him, a full recognition of all his appointments, acknowledges our Lord Jesus: as our text declares, he has the pre-eminence,—he is Lord of all. Assuredly all who shall endeavor to live up to this motto to the best of their ability will enjoy much of divine favor.

The text suggests the thought that the divine government is an autocratic one—the reverse of a democratic government, "of the people, by the people, for the people." As we look over the governments of civilized nations, we find that the more autocratic the government the less intelligent the people who will support it. . . .

It may at first seem strange to some that the type of earthly government least favorable, least esteemed by the intelligent,—the autocratic form, should most nearly represent the form of government which the Almighty has instituted for the entire realm of creation. If an autocratic form of government has proven itself so unfavorable to human liberty and progress amongst men now, can it be possible that this form of government is the very best for the universe in general, and forever? If so, wherein lies the difference? By what process of reasoning shall we demonstrate that that which experimentally amongst men has proven itself to be bad, should ultimately prove itself to be best? We answer that the difference is because all men are fallen and imperfect; hence are under the dominion of sin and selfishness to a greater or less degree; and additionally, all are imperfect in knowledge and in judgment, even if their hearts were fully disposed for righteousness. On the contrary, the Almighty is perfect in his attributes, and in his knowledge; and the law of his being as well as the law of his empire is—the reverse of selfishness—the law of Love. It is indeed dangerous to be fully under the power of any fallen imperfect being, however well intentioned; but it is a most desirable thing to be under the guidance and control of a perfect being, possessed of all knowledge, wisdom, justice, love, power. This is the situation: Jehovah, our God, is a dictator, his laws are perfect, just and good, and all of his creatures subject to those laws are blessed. Under these conditions, the autocratic, theocratic government which now obtains in heaven, is the most desirable one of all; hence, as our Lord suggests, we pray that this same government may ere long come to earth; saying,—"Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is done in Heaven."

Although Jehovah God, our Creator, is not elected to his position, and does not hold it through the consent of his creatures; yet all of his creatures who are in harmony with the principles of righteousness delight to hold him as their King and Lord.—their Dictator, whose every wish it is their pleasure to obey. As a Dictator he has appointed Christ Jesus to be "Head of the body, the Church." But although we are not asked to vote, as to whether or not Christ shall be the head of the Church, God, nevertheless, respects our free moral agency, to the extent that we are not compelled to accept his arrangement in this matter. But, if we object, it means that we are not of the body, the Church; for **the Almighty proceeds with his own plans, and those who do not fall in with those plans merely fail to that extent to secure to themselves the proffered blessings.**

Similarly the Almighty did not inquire of the angels whether or not they would accept the glorified Jesus as their Lord: he autocratically elevated our Lord Jesus, because of his implicit obedience even unto death, even the death of the cross, as the Apostle declares, "Wherefore [on account of his obedience unto death] God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess . . . to the glory of God the Father." Similarly, our context declares, that in his prehuman condition our Lord Jesus was from the beginning the head, the chief of all his Father's creatures, works, arrangements. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Col. 1:16, 17.) This agrees also with the statement of John's Gospel (1:1), "In the beginning was the Logos and the Logos was with the God, and the Logos was a God: the same was in the beginning with the God. All things were made by him; and without him was not one thing made that was made."

It appears from this, that the Heavenly Father has exercised his autocratic government from the beginning; choosing his first-born Son to be his representative in the entire work of creation. It appears further that it was to this first-born Son that the privilege or opportunity of becoming man's Redeemer was first proferred—as a privilege; because the Almighty autocratically intended that this matter of man's redemption should not only display his Justice and Love, his Wisdom and his Power, in respect to mankind, but it should additionally be a test, a manifestation, of the loyalty of his First-begotten; and that such loyalty, being fully demonstrated, would properly become the occasion for the still further advancement of his First-begotten One, —to the divine nature, "glory, honor, immortality," —demonstrating his worthiness in all things to be **pre-eminent.**

It is not, of course, the Apostle's thought that the Father made the Lord Jesus pre-eminent above himself, Jehovah. We are continually to remember the Apostle's suggestion of 1 Cor. 15:27, where, after declaring that the Father hath put all things under the Son, he adds, "It is **manifest** [need not be stated] that he [Jehovah] is excepted, which did put all things under him [Jesus]." So, gathering the proper thought of our text, we are still to remember that God is first: and that our Lord Jesus is first to us, as the Head of the Church, because God has given him this pre-eminence. In recognizing Jesus' full authority and headship of the Church, we are honoring him who appointed him, and thus we keep God first: as our Lord declares, "All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." (John 5:23.) They are not to confound the two, but are to worship and reverence and obey both the Father and the Son; for the latter seeks not, and does not his own will, but the will of the Father who sent him, and who exalted him to his position of pre-eminence over all his creatures. The Apostle explains this relationship fully and emphatically when he declares that,—The head of the woman is the man; and the head of the man is Christ; and the head of Christ is God—Jehovah.—1 Cor. 11:3.

In the Church the divine law or theocracy is already to some extent established. We do not refer to the human institutions called churches, but to the Church "whose names are written in heaven," and whose leadership and membership as a body are directed by the Lord Jesus, their appointed Head. . . . And here we note the Lord's arrangement for his Church to be a combination of the two forms of Government. (1) It is democratic, inasmuch as the choice of the leaders is to be determined by the judgment of the **members.** (2) It is theocratic in the sense that the members are not to exercise their own preferences in respect to their choice (votes), but are to use their best intelligence in ascertaining **the will of the Lord,** their Head, in the matter; and hence are to express by their votes so far as they are able, not their own wills, but the will of the Lord. Here is the most harmonious and simple and beneficent arrangement imaginable under present conditions. Each individual, or unit of the Church, member in the "body" of Christ, is to say within his own heart, **"God first,"** and God's appointment of Christ as a Bishop or Shepherd of his flock makes him and his will pre-eminent in our thoughts, in our hearts, in our words, in our deeds. **We must, so far as we can discern his will, follow the same;** so far as we can understand his Word, we are to speak his Word; and in our choice of leaders his will and not our own is to control. Thus in the Church, in the "body," in all of its associated interests and affairs, God first and Christ, his representative, pre-eminent, is to be the order. Thus God, through his faithful, still sets in the Church the various members, according as it pleases him. (1 Cor. 12:18.) But this applies to each little group of the Lord's people, and to the whole church in general, only in proportion as they conform to his will and Word,—making God first and Christ, the Head, pre-eminent.

This same principle is to be carried beyond the Church into the homes of the Lord's people. There, also, God is to be first and his representative, Christ, to be pre-eminent. If the head of the family be a member of the body of Christ, and recognizes him to be his Head, he must recognize his laws in the family as well as in the Church. And recognizing his law he must oppose every thing approximating anarchy—lawlessness: he must hold up before the family as well as before himself, Jehovah the autocratic governor and law-giver; and Christ Jesus his autocratic representative; and the perfect law of Love, which he sets forth, to be the law of all those who are members of his body;—to rule in their hearts perfectly, and in their mortal flesh as far as lieth in them,—to the extent of their ability. The reign of law in every family should be enforced both by precept and example; but it must never be forgotten that it is the law of Love—prompted by love, executed in love, accompanied by every kind and helpful influence possible.

This will mean that so far as possible each member of the Church recognizing Christ as his Head, will seek to do the will of God in his family; and this will mean that if he has not already established the Family Altar of prayer, he will immediately do so,—to the extent that this is possible. If on account of work or business it is impossible to have family devotions daily, he can probably have them weekly, and we presume that the Lord will accept the good intentions and best endeavors thus evidenced. If the man, the divinely appointed head of the family, is not a member of the body of Christ, the wife, though a Christian, is to recognize the divine law upon this subject, that the man is the head of the woman and of the family, and she is not to establish **family** worship in any manner in conflict with the expressed will of her husband. She should seek the Lord's blessing and guidance and over-ruling providences, that her husband may be agreeable to the arrangement, and should await the results. The husband who is not a Christian but is, nevertheless, morally and religiously disposed, will under these conditions feel all the more the responsibilities of his position; and the wise and moderate and noble conduct of the wife will have the greater weight with him because of her moderation in this matter, and the evidence he has that she is subject to a higher law and lawgiver, to whom he also should be subject.

Putting God first, and Christ pre-eminent as his representative, should have an influence also upon our business dealings in which we come in contact with the world: so that in our buying or selling, or whatsoever we do, we should remember continually to seek to do those things pleasing in the sight of the one whom we desire to please, and who is **pre-eminent** in our hearts. This will mean a decrease of selfishness and an increase of love, and a decrease of meanness and an increase of nobility of character toward all; and the result will be as our Master suggested, saying, "Let your light so shine before men that they seeing your good works shall glorify your Father which is in heaven."

But while this matter of putting God first, and recognizing his appointments, laws and will in all of life's affairs, will exercise the foregoing influences in matters of the Church, matters of the home and family and matters of business and contact with the world, yet the chief influence of all will surely be found in our own hearts and lives. The thought of the will of Christ pre-eminent, connecting with all the doings of life in public and in private,—the thought that we wish God to have the first place in our affections, and his blessing in respect to our influence, our joys, our pleasures, our hopes, our aims,—what a blessing this will bring!—what godliness, what growth in the fruits and graces of the spirit! Very quickly this pre-eminence of Christ will expand beyond the actions of life and attach itself to our words. The true Christian will seek not only to act gently, as he believes the Lord would be pleased to have him act, but additionally, he will seek to speak gently, kindly, moderately, modestly, —and thus to show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. No better homage and worship can we offer to the Lord, and no greater honor can we do to his name amongst men, than by exemplifying his teachings in the words and acts of our lives.

But now we come to the most important point of all; for behind all our doings and teachings, in public and in private, are our thoughts. **It is of paramount importance that in seeking to have God first in life's affairs, we shall see to it that he is first in our thoughts;**—that Jesus there has the pre-eminence which God intends he should have;—that our affections should be pre-eminently set upon him more than upon husband, wife, or children; more than upon houses or lands; more than upon honors of men. Christ is to be enthroned in our hearts pre-eminent over all things,—yea, pre-eminent over self, and with many this submission of self is the most difficult proposition. This is exactly what our Lord taught, saying,—"If any man come to me, and hate not [love not less] his father, and mother, and wife and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, his own life, [being] also, he cannot be my disciple." —Luke 14:26.

Recurring to the illustration of our text—that of the human body, of which Christ is the head and all we are members: let us notice how intimate is the connection between the head and the members in a healthy, properly constituted body. Each member is in direct communication with the head by means of the nerves (however rapidly it is effected); in case of trouble, accident, pain,—the matter is at once reported to the head, and immediately a member of the body, perhaps a hand, is prompt to give service. The head has full direction because the spirit of the head pervades all the members of the body; so that,—"If one member suffer, all suffer with it;" and every member, in proportion as it is in harmony with the head and its spirit of love for the members, will be prompt to act. Sometimes in our human bodies the hand may stretch forth assistance to the injured member so quickly that it seems impossible to conceive that the message first went to the head, and that our hand was subsequently directed by the head to assist; and so it is with the members of the body of Christ; those who are in full touch and sympathy with the Head, the Lord, are to so large an extent of "one spirit" with him, so anxious to do his will, and so well informed in respect to what his will is, that they sometimes seem to act almost automatically, in respect to rendering help by word, or deed, or otherwise to those with whom they are in contact.

Let us, dear brethren and sisters, have for the watchword of our hearts, "God First"—and Christ "pre-eminent" by divine appointment;—remembering that it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh, and the general conduct of life proceeds. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."—Prov. 4:23. Z. '02:100-103.

Paul's Dying Words

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course: I have kept the faith."—2 Tim. 4: 7.

PAUL wrote these his dying words to Timothy whom he dearly loved, and frequently refers to as his son. He was in prison in the city of Rome, and is supposed to have been sixty-three years of age at this time. His imprisonment in Rome referred to in a previous lesson, when he was permitted to live in "his own hired house," had terminated by his being released from custody; and it is supposed that during the period of his release, about three years, he revisited some of the Churches previously established and also carried the gospel into Spain.

It was during this interim of his freedom that the great persecution arose in Rome under Nero. That brutal Emperor is supposed to have caused the city of Rome to be set on fire that he might witness a great conflagration from the tower of his palace, or possibly with a view to having it rebuilt in a more modern style a monument to himself. But the losses occasioned by this fire, which could not be gotten under control for six days, and which laid a large portion of the city in ashes, stirred up so great a commotion amongst the people, so aroused their anger, that he thought it discreet to let the blame be laid at the door of Christianity;—the charge being that the Christians were the incendiaries and responsible for the great destruction wrought. Following out this line of policy, Nero began a terrible persecution of Christians, thus directing the suspicion of the people away from himself and against those who had taken the name of Christ: who were unpopular anyway with the wicked and the idolatrous. Multitudes were slain with the sword, exposed in the amphitheaters to be torn by wild beasts, or covered with the skins of wild beasts to be torn to pieces by dogs, while some were wrapped in sheets covered with pitch and tied to stakes and set on fire as torches, to illuminate Nero's garden.

This persecution commenced shortly after Paul's release from his first imprisonment in Rome; and the spirit of bitter persecution thus aroused was still hot, when, three years later, he was again arrested. This time, as he explains in the words of this lesson (verses 16-18), it would appear that he had a public examination, possibly before Nero himself; but the fear of the people was so great, and **quite probably the Apostle's language so bold,** that he was forsaken of all, as was the Master when before Pilate. He tells us nevertheless, that he had with him the Lord's presence, which strengthened him to such an extent that he spoke the Word with a boldness which permitted the gospel to be fully known to the Gentiles thereabouts. He evidently was more anxious to make known the "good tidings" than to preserve himself from pain and death. He was a true and noble soldier of the cross—a close follower in the footsteps of our great Chief Captain, Christ Jesus. Paul's prison was a very uncomfortable place we may be sure. We visited the place which tradition points out in the city of Rome as being the place of his incarceration. It is a dungeon below the surface, dark, damp and extremely forbidding. But notwithstanding all this the reader must be struck with the tone of triumph which pervades the Apostle's writings from there. What else than the power of God could so sustain an able and cultured man under the various trials and vicissitudes through which he passed, including this his last imprisonment and his final execution, which followed shortly after the writing of this epistle to Timothy? He was spared from crucifixion by reason of being a Roman citizen, and instead he was beheaded, says tradition.

* * *

How humble and yet how confident are the closing words of the great Apostle's testimony (verses 6-8), "I have fought a good fight," etc. He did not boast of perfection in his flesh, but on the contrary disclaimed it, saying, that he had constant need to keep his body "under," in subjection to the new mind. He did not boast of how many Churches he had established, nor how many converts he had made and baptized. He did not boast of his knowledge of the Lord's Word, nor of his ability as a speaker, nor of how many epistles he had written, nor of his imprisonments and sufferings for the sake of the gospel. His boast, on the contrary, was simply that he had fought well, fought faithfully, fought the best he was able, against sin abounding on every hand and weaknesses in himself. His boast was not that he had made a faith, nor that he had expressed the gospel in the most clear and positive manner which would descend generations after him to glorify God and to bless his people; but his boast merely was that he had "kept the faith," the faith which God through his Word had inspired, the faith which he had received, and was given to all of the Lord's people; he had kept it, he had been faithful to it, he had not bartered it for a mess of pottage, earthly advantages.

On the strength of these two points,—his having kept the Word of the Lord's testimony obediently, and his having fought in defence of it to the end of his course, to the best of his ability—on the strength of these two things he builds his hope for the crown of rejoicing in the Kingdom with the Redeemer and his faithful, at his appearing.

What an encouragement is here for the very humblest of God's people; not by intellectual or physical strength, not by wonderful works, not by anything that we can do or have done for the Lord, his cause, and his people, are we to hope for eternal glory; but simply with the Apostle we are to seek to use what talents we do possess and what opportunities the Lord provides for us, faithfully. We are to keep the faith, not denying the faith **under any consideration.** We too, are to fight the good fight against selfishness in its every phase, especially in ourselves, and to develop in ourselves more and more under the Lord's instruction, his spirit, the spirit of love, the holy spirit.—Z. '97: 298-300.

Covered Sins to be Blotted Out

MANY make the mistake of confounding the "blotting out" of sins with the covering of sins; but the two thoughts are distinctly separate. The covering of sins takes place instantaneously, as soon as the believer has repentantly accepted of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. This covering of sin, and of all the blemishes of the believer is symbolically represented as accomplished by his putting on the "wedding garment," the pure robe of Christ's righteousness imputed to true believers. This constitutes the justification by faith of which the Apostle speaks, saying, "David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works [righteousness which he had not worked out] saying, 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."—Rom. 4: 6-8.

While it brings to the believer joy and peace to realize that his imperfections are covered, and not permitted to hinder his approach to the Heavenly Father, he nevertheless properly battles against those imperfections, a continual warfare—the newly-begotten and renewed or transformed mind being resisted by the natural, depraved will of the flesh. But, nevertheless, every true child of God, rightly instructed from the Father's word, is distinctly looking forward to the end of his warfare-probation, when his "covered" sins and weaknesses shall all be "blotted out."

This blotting out of sins, so far as the overcoming Church is concerned, will not be completed until the first resurrection has been completed; for, as the work of grace began by the covering of the imperfections of the flesh for believers, it will end with the complete destruction of the flesh in death, and the raising of the elect Church spiritual bodies, free from all the blemishes and imperfections which belong to these present, mortal bodies. Now the consecrated "have this treasure [the new nature] in earthen vessels:" and all know how seriously marred is every one of these vessels, so that our very best intentions and desires are liable to have more or less of blemish or imperfection, when viewed from the Divine standpoint. But by-and-by this treasure, the new will, the new creature in Christ Jesus, will be delivered into the perfect condition, the new spiritual bodies, described by the Apostle (1 Cor. 15:42-44, 48-50), saying: "Thus also is the resurrection of the dead [the first or chief resurrection of the overcoming class amongst the dead] . . . It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption"—all the marks and blemishes of sin which belong to the earthen vessel will be destroyed, "blotted out." When buried in death, the Church is actually imperfect, dishonorable and weak, except as her Lord's robe of righteousness is her covering, and his strength is made perfect in her weakness. But all these dishonorable, weak and imperfect conditions now covered are to be completely and everlastingly blotted out with the passing of the present life; for the promise to the overcomers is, "It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown an animal body, it is raised a spiritual body"—the image of the heavenly one, our Lord. . . .

The Apostle had in mind the same earnest desire of the spirit-begotten ones for the completion of the work of grace in them at the resurrection, when he said: "Ourselves, also, which have the first fruits of the spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption—to wit, the deliverance of our body—[the Church—from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of full sonship]." Rom. 8:23. The "wedding garment" of Christ's imputed righteousness, under which are granted to us all the privileges of sons without removing our weaknesses and frailties, leaves us to wage a warfare with these, thus to prove our love of righteousness and our faithfulness to the commands of "him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light," and to become sharers of his sufferings, and of the glories to follow. Through the merit of our robe we were begotten to the new mind, the new nature; and it will serve every purpose until such times as we shall have proved ourselves faithful as new creatures, and shall be permitted to pass from the probationary sonship to the enjoyment of the full measure of the Father's blessing and complete adoption into his family and nature. But there, at the moment of transition, when being received from the begotten and probationary stage of sonship into the everlasting state, it is eminently proper, and all that we would ask or desire, that every trace of the hitherto covered and forgiven sins and blemishes should be blotted out, and no longer need covering. And all this is a part of the Divine provision for those who love God, "the [faithful] called ones according to his purpose." Then, it will be that that which is perfect having come, "that which is in part [our present standing graciously covered with Christ's imputed righteousness, covering our defects] will be done away."

"Oh, hail happy day!
That ends our tears and sorrows,
That brings us joy without alloy;
Oh, hail happy day!
No more by doubts and fears distressed,
We now shall gain our promised rest,
And be forever blest,
Oh, hail happy day!"

—Z. '97:226, 227.

One of the Master's Forceful and Beautiful Lessons

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow."—Matthew 6:28.

MANY and varied are the precious lessons taught by the Master during His earthly ministry, and they never grow old. To the true disciple of Christ they are ever new, ever fresh. Whether He taught by the seaside or on the mountains or by the wayside, as He walked and talked with His chosen Twelve, His words of wisdom and grace come to us vibrant with meaning, pulsating with life, full of strength and power, cheering, encouraging and blessing our hearts.

In using these words under our consideration, our Lord, as was His custom, drew an illustration of something familiar to all His hearers. God's care over the lilies seemed a fitting reminder of His greater care over His own people, of His infinite Wisdom, Power and Love. He who so carefully supervised the clothing of the simple flower—which bloomed only to fade in a day—that its robes were more regal than the kingly vesture of Solomon, would surely provide for the clothing of those who trusted in Him!

Some Have His Promise—Some Have Not

Undoubtedly much that our Lord said to the Jews would not have been said to Gentiles; for the Gentiles were then under the general curse and condemnation—the whole world was alienated from God. The people of Israel alone had been brought back into covenant relationship with God, through the Law Covenant made at Mount Sinai; hence different words would be applicable to them. Having come into relationship with God, His promises were theirs. All things should work for their blessing—their cattle, their fields, everything, would be blessed of the Lord, if they would be faithful to Him. Our Lord was, therefore, in line with this thought, exhorting the children of Israel to have greater confidence in God, greater trust in Him who had chosen them to be His peculiar people.

We, like the Master, should make a clear distinction between the persons to whom we would give consolation and assurances of God's care, and all others. We are to remember that some have come into His family and some have not! that some have His promises as theirs, and some have not. **We are not to deceive others and to imply that they have a right to claim as their own, promises which were never given to them.** Rather, we shall do them more good if we point out that these promises are conditional—only for those who make a covenant with the Lord. To the Christian this lesson of unfailing trust and confidence in God is a very important one, and to have learned it represents a very considerable growth in grace and in knowledge—in the spirit of love, which casts out all fear. It means a nearness to God, a fellowship with Him, which those who have not learned this lesson cannot enjoy.

The World's Heavy Burdens

To the people whom the Master generally addressed, the matter of providing for the necessities of life was a very important one. He rarely had the very rich amongst His audience, generally the poor; and the poor in Palestine and other Eastern countries find it very difficult to obtain food, clothing, etc. In many parts of the world today, especially in India, there are people who scarcely ever go to bed without going hungry; and to these the necessities of life are a very important consideration.

Our Lord Jesus indicated that this was so in His time, saying that the important consideration with most people was, "What shall we eat and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" They were anxious and worried. "After these things do the Gentiles seek," said the Master. Their object in life was to procure food and raiment. That was the burden of their prayer. And even the Jews, though professedly the people of God, had not learned implicit trust in Him, but were to a large extent grasping after the material things, seeking chiefly worldly gain rather than the true riches. Our Lord said that His disciples were to realize that God knew what things they had need of before they asked Him, and should rest fully content in the matter of what God would provide them respecting their temporalities. Jesus wished them to be sure that God would so supervise their interests that they should not want anything really good and needful to them.

This seems to be the whole lesson that our Lord was inculcating in bringing in this illustration from nature—"Consider the lilies of the field." It was a forceful reminder that the things of the Kingdom were the things of paramount importance, and that in seeking these things first, they might have the assurance that all needed earthly things should be theirs.

Proper Consideration of the Lily

What is it that we are to consider about the lilies? "How they grow!" What does this mean? Jesus Himself answers, "They toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." That is, the lilies grow in a very reasonable way; they develop grace and beauty, and are adorned in robes of loveliness without putting forth unnatural, unusual stress or effort. They are not worried about growing. The lily does not wake up in the morning and say, "Now, I wonder if I can make another quarter of an inch today. I wonder if I shall be able to grow as fast and to look as beautiful as that lily over there; and I wonder what people will think about me." It simply assimilates what it can absorb from the earth, and from the atmosphere what God has provided for it there. It does not say, "I think that I shall go to another place, I cannot grow here," but it does the best it can wherever it happens to be.

The lilies of Palestine to which our Lord referred were evidently not the kind of flowers that we generally term lilies, but were apparently of some other plant family, and a very numerous species, we should judge, growing everywhere. Those who are accustomed to the flowers of Palestine point to a common reddish flower which they think was meant by "the lilies of the field."

Our lesson, then, as New Creatures ,is that since we have given our hearts to the Lord we are not to be worried, anxious, about the things of the present life. Nor are we to be over-anxious regarding our spiritual growth. We are simply to do our best. But we are to be particularly engaged respecting the things God has promised us as New Creatures in Christ, that we may attain to the glories which our Father has in reservation for those who love Him. If we give our attention to these things, the Master assures us, the Heavenly Father will so supervise our affairs that we shall not lack any necessity of a spiritual kind or of an earthly kind. He will give us whatever of spiritual blessings and of temporal blessings we need as spirit-begotten children of God that we may finish our course with joy.

We are not to interpret our Lord's words to mean that we are to neglect our proper duties in life; that He would not have us do any more spinning or toiling than the lilies do; that He would not have us labor with our hands and our brains in order to care for our family, home, etc. Surely not! for these things are inculcated in the Word of God. Here, evidently, He is merely impressing us with the thought that while we are doing to the very best of our ability in harmony with the surroundings and conditions which God has provided for us, we are not to be worried. We are to be as free from anxious care as are the lilies, to be fully content and to look up in faith to our Heavenly Father, expecting and accepting His providential care and overruling in all our affairs and interests.

Rest and Peace in Perfect Trust

God knows all about our circumstances. If we need to be transplanted to another place, into a different kind of soil, where our new nature can better thrive and expand, or where our reasonable, temporal needs can be better obtained, He can arrange for it. He knows just what is good for us, best for us, temporally and spiritually. It is our part to look for His leadings, not attempting to take the helm into our own hands, nor concluding that the Lord will never change our conditions, etc. If it is best for us that they shall be changed, He will change them, if we trust in Him; and surely, if we are His children, it is **His** will that we desire, not our own! We are to be perfectly restful under whatever conditions or circumstances we find ourselves, restful in the thought, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him."—Matthew 6:8.

Will this not mean sometimes strong tests of faith and endurance, if the conditions of our lot are painful and hard to bear? It may be such; but if the Lord's providence does not for a time offer a way of escape, we may be sure that the test will prove one of the "all things" that will work out our good, if we submit sweetly to His will and wait for Him to point out a different way, if it shall seem best to Him. Let us as lilies of His planting, bloom for the glory of our Heavenly Husbandman.

Asking For Daily Needs

While Jesus tells us that we should ask, "Give us this day our daily bread," this is not a specification of what we would prefer to have in a temporal way. We are not to specify things that would be most pleasing to our palate. We are to leave that part to Him. We are merely to acknowledge that we are dependent upon Him for the necessities of life, that we are looking to Him, that we are waiting on His providence and will accept those things which His Wisdom provides as proper for us in connection with the instructions of His Word.

So on we go, happy and content in God, and preparing for the Kingdom; for Christians who cannot learn now, under present conditions, to trust in God, would probably not be able to learn this lesson under other conditions. Present conditions are especially helpful, indeed, for those who would cultivate trust, dependence upon the Lord. In this respect we see that the poor have an advantage over the rich: and it was those who were poor, like the lilies of the field, that our Lord Jesus was addressing in the words of our text. And it is to those who are poor in spirit, who realize their own impotency, who long for the rest and peace that Jesus alone can give, who come to Him for this rest, that all the Master's gracious promises and lessons of wisdom, comfort and instruction are given.

"O flower of Heavenly birth, blooming in earthly soil,
Taking on fairest hues from sun and wind and rain,
Soon shall thy beauty grace the Heavenly realms Above,
Transplanted to a fairer clime to bud and bloom again!" —Z. '16:341, 342.

A Serious Question

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."—2 Pet. 3:11.

IF this was a serious consideration in the Apostle's day, how much more weighty does it seem to-day, when we stand at the threshold of the new dispensation, and in the very midst of all the disintegrating influences of the old. A few more years will wind up the present order of things, and then the chastened world will stand face to face with the actual conditions of the established Kingdom of God. And yet the course of the Church is to be finished within the brief space of time that intervenes.

Seeing, then, that all these things—present political, social, religious and financial arrangements—are to be dissolved, and that so soon, and also how apart from these things are the real interests of the saints, how comparatively unimportant should the things of this present order seem to us: they are not worthy our time or words, which should go to the things which alone will survive. And, having such hopes as are set before us, and so clear a knowledge of the grand outcome, as well as of the minutiae of the divine plan, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? And yet with what carefulness we need to guard against being overcharged with the petty cares of this present time, and against imbibing the spirit of the world, which is all about us, and mixed with every question of the hour.

Only by constant watchfulness and prayer can we keep ourselves unspotted from the world. We need to keep a vigilant watch over our general character to see that it bears the divine likeness: that meekness, sincerity, moderation, temperance and truth are always manifest in us. And then we should see that all our conversation is such as becometh saints.—Z. '94:56, 57.

◆

Fiery trials are to be expected by all of the Lord's people, especially in this day of the Lord. **As surely as we are sons of God we shall have them**; and when they come we should promptly recognize their mission to us and see that we are exercised by them unto godliness, sobriety and deep and fervent piety. "Now no chastening (discipline) for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."—Heb. 12:11. Z. '96:44.

All his promises are yea and amen only to those who are **in Christ Jesus.** This class, while just as busy, just as active, just as fervent in spirit as any of the worldly, have not the fret, have not the worry of the others; because the Lord Almighty has covenanted with them that he will do for them according to heavenly wisdom what would be for their highest welfare. So then, these can rejoice—

"In every condition, in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale or abounding in wealth."
—Z. '98:43.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

The selection of the Church is along lines of severe testing.—Z. '97 : 83.

◆

"Unbelief never gets beyond the difficulties, the cities, the walls, the giants. It is always prefering them, dwelling on them, pitting them against its own resources. Faith, on the other hand, though it never minimizes the difficulties, looks them steadily in the face, turns from them and looks into the face of God, and counts on him.—Z. '07 : 252.

◆

But we do not need to wrestle with God for His special blessing. We already have this blessing. We are not servants crying for a crumb. The Lord has put upon us His best robe; He has given us His Holy Spirit. But He has promised us certain things conditional upon our asking, and He wishes us to continue to come to Him in faith in simple, earnest prayer—not wrestling in prayer.—Z. '16 : 23.

◆

The secret of the Apostle Paul's success, and the reason why God used him so graciously as a servant, is a lesson which all who attempt to serve the truth to others would do well to note and to apply to themselves. Was it not because he preached not himself but the Lord and His gospel? Do not many would-be teachers fail to attain results and to be more used of the Lord because their ambition really preaches self, and the gospel as a means for calling attention to self.—Z. '97 : 217.

◆

"The Lord is exalted: for he dwelleth on high. He hath filled Zion with justice and righteousness. Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times and the strength of thy happiness: the fear (reverence) of the Lord is his treasure." That is to say, the Zion class will be distinct and separate from others, and their advantage will consist largely in the divine wisdom and knowledge granted them, because of their obedience to their consecration.—Z. '92 :343.

◆

Question: Please make some comment on Deut. 29 : 29.

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. Deut. 29 : 29.

Answer: We understand this to mean that the Lord's people are to be careful to study and obey all that the Lord our God has commanded, searching diligently to appreciate it as it may become due to be understood. There are questions, nevertheless, respecting which the Lord has made no particular revelation, and we are to avoid the waste of time in considering those things, and to realize that had they been important for us to know the Lord would have revealed them in his Word. This is in harmony with the Apostle's statement, "All Scripture that is given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto every good work." These assurances of sufficiency of the meat in due season to the household of faith should not only relieve us from anxious thought on outside lines, but should make us suspicious of anything and everything that is being taught that is additional to the Scriptures, as well as contrary to them.—Z. '04 :127.

◆

In the meekness of his youth, his loyalty to God, his faithfulness, zeal, courage and wise discretion, David's character was a very beautiful type of the beloved One, to whom God referred when he said, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him."

Our Lord Jesus is the mighty One upon whom the help of the world is laid. He is the great deliverer, but it has pleased God also to associate with him, in this great work the Church of the Gospel Age, the elect "little flock," whose names are written in heaven. These, all chosen out of the people, constitute that one body, which, with Christ Jesus their Head, shall bless all the families of the earth. These all possess the characteristics enumerated above, which are pre-eminently the characteristics of their Head. All, therefore, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, whose souls thirst after God as the hart for the water-brook, and who, having found him, have consecrated themselves to him and received the anointing of the holy spirit, witnessing with their spirits that they are the sons of God, and who as anointed sons can discover in themselves the worthy traits of true sons, enumerated above,—loyalty, faithfulness, zeal, energy, courage, discretion, etc.,—these constitute the class with whom the Lord has made a covenant and to whom belong "the sure mercies of David."—Z. '96 : 29.

◆

If the stranger come with enticing words, saying, Let me show you a broader salvation than that you have learned from the apostles and prophets to hope for; . . . The true sheep says, That sounds very benevolent, and yet it has not the ring of the Shepherd's voice in it. No, this voice that prophesies smooth things, contrary to the Word of God is not the voice of the good Shepherd. —Z. '94 :134.

◆

A little carelessness, a little looking away from the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him, a little putting of our minds and affections on earthly things, earthly hopes, earthly ambitions, earthly prospects, would speedily mean great loss to us.—Z. '07 : 4.

How strange you would think it if we were to say, We feel it our duty to tell the readers of this journal who are saints, that they should not make or worship images, that they should not blaspheme God's name, that they should not steal from their neighbors, that they should not murder their neighbors, nor slander them, nor bear false witness against them. The intelligent and consecrated reader would feel offended, and that justly. He would say, The Editor has a very low opinion of his readers, or he would not so address them.

Just so it would be strange indeed if God or Christ had given the Ten Commandments to the Gospel Church as the basis of His Covenant. And the truly consecrated and spirit-of-love-begotten ones, would have been justified in questioning the wisdom and love of putting them under an expression of the divine law so far below their nature and wish and covenant as to be almost an insult.

But the law of love, while it is a law of liberty and an "easy yoke" to such as have the Lord's spirit, is nevertheless a most searching law—discerning, scrutinizing, judging the very thoughts and intents of our hearts—as well as our actions and words. In that one word, Love, is expressed the very essence of the divine law. Love to God implies full obedience, full recognition of divine character—wisdom, love, justice and power: full harmony with and service of God, and the exercise of those qualities of character in all our thoughts, words and deeds.—Z. '94:352.

◆

What is true of teachers is true also of books written by teachers: "If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. 8:20.—Z. '03:188.

◆

"'Trimmed and burning!' 'trimmed and burning!'" says some thoughtful soul. "I have often sung with fervor these words, 'Let the lower lights be burning,' 'Trim your lamps,' etc., but what does it mean?" "It means that we must give very close attention to the words of life that we may come to an exact knowledge of the truth, and that we must carefully and faithfully trim away every vestige of error as fast as it becomes apparent to us—whether it be an error in doctrine or in our daily walk and conversation—so that the pure light of divine truth may shine out with as little obstruction as possible through the medium of a clear and transparent character.—Z. '03:358.

◆

The Church is today "as a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid." Much is expected of us, even by our opponents. Much is surely expected of us by our Lord. Then let us be faithful, dear brethren, in word, in act, in all our deportment. Thus shall we honor the name of our God and of our Savior and King, whom we hope soon to see face to face.
—Z. '16:327.

◆

"OUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF CHRIST"

Where's the day I'll call dreary,
While his favor shines so bright?
Where's the time in which I'll weary
Of his loving words of light?

Where's the test of faith that's greater
Than the measure of his grace?
Where's the loss of goods more precious
Than what's given in its place?

Where's the stone on which I'll stumble
While I trust to him my hand?
Where's the fear to make me tremble
When his words the winds command?

Where's the cross that is too heavy
When his strength doth lend me aid?
Where's the crowned head I'd envy
Since he's having my crown made?

Where's the home that we could long for
Like his palace up above?
Where's a way more fit to get there
Than his narrow way of love?—**B. H. Barton.**
—Z. '07:364.

Helpful Thoughts From The Volumes

The Heavenly Father is pleased to have us desire and ask for more and more of the holy Spirit—a disposition more and more fully in harmony with his Spirit: and all who thus desire and ask and seek it shall obtain their good desires; the Father will be pleased to so order the affairs of such that hindrances to the Spirit, whether in them or in their environment, shall be overcome, that his loving Spirit may abound in them—that they may be filled with the Spirit.—E. 223.

◆

Unquestionably, the majority of the Church troubles spring not from a desire to wrong, nor even from a wrong unintentionally committed, but from misunderstandings and, at least, partial misinterpretations of intentions or motives.—F. 291.

As our Lord was chastened for our transgressions, not his own, when he bore the sins of many, so his followers in many respects suffer, not for their own wrong-doings, but by reason of the wrong-doings of others, for they are called as the Apostle declares, to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for his body's sake, which is the Church."—Col. 1:24.—E. 234.

◆

In proportion as the Lord's people are filled with his holy Spirit or influence, and are expanded more and more by it, and enlarged, they have the less of the spirit of fear. The spirit of fear in a Christian is the spirit of doubt, and marks a lack of faith, a lack of the holy Spirit.—E. 249.

God is evidently putting a premium upon humility in connection with all whom he invites to become members of this New Creation. The Apostle points this out, saying, "Humble yourselves, therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." (1 Pet. 5:6. Paul points them to the pattern, Christ Jesus—how he humbled himself and made himself of no reputation, seeking a lower nature and suffering death, even the death of the cross, etc., on account of which obedience and humility God highly exalted him. Then Peter points the lesson, saying, "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." (1 Pet. 5:5.) Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many great or wise or learned are called, but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith. With the premium which God sets upon humanity, there is also a premium, which he sets upon faith. He would have for New Creatures those who have learned to trust him implicitly, who accept his grace as sufficient for them, and in the strength which he supplies attain—as incidental to their exaltation—the victory to which he calls them.—F. 90.

◆

Honesty to the Truth is a prime essential to progress in it; to oppose what one believes to be the truth, and to even temporarily uphold what one believes to be an error, "for fun," or for any other reason, will surely be offensive to the Lord and bring some just retribution. Alas, how many have undertaken to "see just what could be said" against a position which they believed to be the Truth, and have been entangled and entirely captivated and blinded while pursuing this course! Next to the Lord, the Truth is the most precious thing in all the world; it is not to be trifled with, not to be played with; and whoever is negligent along this line will himself sustain injury.—See 2 Thess. 2:10, 11. F. 263, 264.

◆

Our confidence is in the Lord, and not in our weak, fallen flesh. We have learned of the grace and mercy of God toward all who are trusting him and seeking to walk after the spirit of Love, even though unable to walk fully up to its perfect requirements. We are not hoping, therefore, to be perfect in the flesh but perfect in spirit, in intention; and that our faith and zeal will (through the merit of our Redeemer) be counted as making up for our actual blemishes, which we hate and strive against daily.—F. 410.

◆

We have all known instances in which humility and lack of confidence, and fear and distrust of God's grace, have given place to an opposite condition of brazen self-assurance and total blindness to faults and pharisaical thanks for being better than other men. Alas! this is a most deplorable and we fear hopeless state! Faith is needful, but it must be faith in God and not in self.—F. 411.

◆

In all that we do we are pointing to the prophecies and fulfilling them. How often it was said of our Lord Jesus, that He said or did this or that "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the mouth of "one of the Prophets."—G. 218.

The Spirit of holiness in abundance can only be received by those who earnestly desire it and seek it by prayer and effort.—E. 223.

◆

His flock shall dwell securely, even in the wilderness condition, until their change come (Job, 14:14), and shall rest in the cooling shadows (Cant. 2:3), in the refreshing truths brought forth from the Storehouse by righteous, strong teachers and leaders among them.—G. 538.

◆

The only ones who see clearly the peculiarly high and grand features of the call of the Gospel age—the only ones, therefore, who could announce or explain this calling—are the very ones who are also shown from God's Word that the time limit of this call was reached in October, 1881. Others, while quoting the Apostle's words concerning a "high calling of God in Christ," really explain the lower call which belongs to the Millennial Age. Hence the general Gospel call, the true one, is ended. None can extend it. Some cannot because they do not understand it and could not give it, and some because they know it to be at an end.—C. 219.

◆

The one who is unappreciative of the privilege of meeting with others for the discussion of these (Truth) subjects is spiritually sick, in some respects, whether he is able to diagnose his own ailment or not. It may be that he is diseased with a kind of spiritual pride and self-sufficiency, which leads him to say to himself, I need not go to the common school of Christ, to be taught with his other followers; I will take private lessons from the Lord at home, and he will teach me separately, and deeper and more spiritual lessons. Quite a few seem to be afflicted with this spiritual egotism—to imagine themselves better than others of the Lord's brethren, and that he would depart from his usual custom and from the lines marked out in his Word, to serve them in a peculiar manner, just because they think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, and because they request it. Such brethren should remember that they have not one solitary promise of the Lord of a blessing so long as they are in this attitude of heart and conduct. On the contrary, "the Lord resisteth the proud and showeth his favors to the humble." The Lord blesses those who hear and obey his instructions, saying, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." To those who are in a right attitude of heart it is quite sufficient that the Lord has enjoined that we come together in his name; and that he has promised special blessings to so few as even two or three obeying him, and that the Church is representatively his body, and is to be prospered by "that which every joint supplieth," and to edify itself and to "build one another up," as members in all the graces and fruits of the Spirit. Sometimes the difficulty is not purely a spiritual egotism, but partially a neglect of the Word of God and a leaning to human understanding, supposing that the promise, "they shall be all taught of God," implies an individual teaching, separate the one from the other. The customs of the apostles and their teachings, and the experience of the Lord's people, are all contrary to such a thought.—F. 310, 311.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER THIRTY-SIX

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Great and Marvelous are Thy Works, Lord God Almighty

WHILE the revelations of divine wisdom and grace concerning the intelligent creation of God command our deepest reverence, no less should his mighty works in the physical creation inspire us with reverence and awe. . . .

In the light of scientific research, the sun is seen to be the center of a great system of worlds revolving around him in definite and invariable orbits and with a precision of time that never varies, some singly and some accompanied by revolving satellites, and others with peculiar rings whose substance is not yet clearly discerned, but is presumed to be liquid. In this system of worlds our earth is one of the smaller planets.

Our solar system of planets is also found to be revolving together around some other great center; and far beyond the farthest limits of our system, by the aid of the telescope, other suns and systems are discerned, all presumably revolving with ours around some common center,—the group **Pleiades.** And the reasonable suggestion has been made that that center may be the heaven of heavens, the highest heaven, the throne of God.

God has established laws so governing the motions of all the heavenly bodies that no clash or discord occurs among them. Each world has its appointed pathway and its regulated time, and the most exact calculations of astronomers find them always true to time and order. How wonderful is our God! Truly in this view "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech, there are no words, their voice is not heard; but their melody extendeth through all the earth, and to the end of the world their words." (Psa. 19:1-4.—Leeser.) The magnificent pageantry of the heavens daily and nightly should elicit our praise and adoration, and should inspire in our hearts holy and reverent devotion. Let the noiseless activity, the perfect obedience to divine law, and the blessed shining of the heavenly hosts, impress their wholesome lessons upon us—of zealous activity without commotion or ostentation; **of perfect obedience to the will of him who doeth all things well,** who is too wise to err and too good to be unkind; and of letting the glory of the Lord which has illuminated us shine from us in turn upon every beholder. Indeed, to those who have been brought into close fellowship with the Lord through a knowledge of his plan of the ages, all his works should be viewed with a keener sense of appreciation—from the tiniest organism seen through the microscope, to the worlds revealed by the telescope.

With the Psalmist our hearts exclaim, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens:"—for, however grand and glorious are the wonders of creation, they proclaim only the superior grandeur and greatness of their Creator. Do we admire intellectual vigor, nobility of conception and skill in execution, comprehensive scope and minute particularity? We see it there! And while recognizing that even we ourselves are his workmanship—"fearfully and wonderfully made," and not beneath his notice and Fatherly care, **we feel humbled** as we recognize our Father's majesty, and in our hearts we say with the Psalmist, again, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? for thou hast made him [but] a little lower than the angels and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the [earthly] works of thy hands." (Psa. 8.) High indeed was the honor conferred upon man and the glory of his dominion (lost in Adam, redeemed in Christ) over the earth which God made "not in vain," but for human habitation. And while, as Job tells us, he "hanged the earth upon nothing," but launched it out in the abyss of space subject to those fixed laws which his wisdom established, we rejoice to know that "The Lord hath prepared his throne [power, dominion, control] in the heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all." (Psa. 103:19.) Surely no confusion or mishap can befall the remotest fragment of his vast empire, the Universe. Yea, Lord, we rejoice to realize that,—

"The whole creation is thy charge,
But saints are thy peculiar care."

—Z. '95:120, 121.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Vancouver Ecclesia extend a hearty invitation to all "Standfasts" to attend a local convention in O'Brien's Hall, corner of Homer and Hastings Streets, commencing Saturday evening, July 3rd, at 8 o'clock, and continuing Sunday and Monday, July 4th and 5th. Two light meals will be provided each day. Reception Committee will meet boats and trains.. Please write Bro. G. H. Biddle, 816 12th Ave. W., Vancouver, B.C., Secretary of Convention.

◆

A series of conventions will be held in the East as follows:—

Kansas City, Mo., July 9th, 10th and 11th. Brother L. A. Smith, 436 Reserve Bank Building, Kansas City, Mo., Secretary of Convention.

Chicago, Ill., July 16th, 17th and 18th. Brother E. J. Morgan, 620 Cottage Row, Sycamore, Ill., Secretary of Convention.

Richfield, Wis., July 30th, 31st and August 1st. Brother Oscar Kuenzike, Colgate, Wis., Secretary of Convention.

Minneapolis, Minn., August 13th, 14th and 15th. Brother C. A. Hallberg, 4153 21st Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn., Secretary of Convention.

All Standfast Bible Students are heartily invited to attend these conventions. Brothers Palmer and Bartlett will be the speakers, possibly assisted by some of the local Elders.

◆

NOTICE

We are given to understand that the Alva Ecclesia desire to invite all classes of Bible Students to their convention. We cannot see how a mixed convention could be spiritually profitable, but rather the reverse. It must inevitably lead to confusion. As we cannot be a party to such a course, we have cancelled our previous arrangements with the Alva Class. The **Alva, Okla.,** Convention therefore will not be held in connection with the "Standfast" movement, nor will Brothers Palmer or Bartlett attend that convention. Numbers 16:9.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER THIRTY-SIX

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18:51.

Thou Shalt Guide Me With Thy Counsel

And Afterward Receive Me to Glory.—Psa. 73:24.

HOW WONDERFUL is the thought that the Almighty God offers to guide his people through the difficulties of the present life by his divine counsel. **One of life's most important lessons is our own insufficiency,** our own lack of wisdom. In childhood days we naturally sought parental counsel. In after years even, while recognizing perhaps the fallibility and imperfection of all human counsel, we nevertheless have found such counsel helpful—perhaps at times absolutely necessary to our welfare: nevertheless, under the realization that to some extent selfishness is a trait in all humanity, we have found it necessary to be on guard on this point also; lest the counsel which we received should be not only fallible but possibly biased by the interests or preferences of the counselor.

But when, after learning of the grace of God and his provision in Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins and the reconciliation of ourselves to him, we not only accepted the forgiveness, but turning over a new leaf, sought to walk in life according to the rules of justice, conscientiously, we found that more than ever we needed counsel—good counsel, unselfish counsel. We found that the course we had adopted is quite contrary to the spirit of the world; and hence that the number who would be able and willing to counsel us along these lines is comparatively small. Then it was that we first learned to go to the Lord's Word for counsel: and as we studied it we found in it more and more of a heavenly wisdom, profitable not only respecting the life to come, but also respecting the things of the present life.

After we had learned more of our own weakness and imperfection and more of the wisdom and grace of God, and after we had heard him inviting us, "calling" us to a full consecration of ourselves to him, and thus to a joint heirship with our Lord Jesus in the coming Kingdom, and after we had found the narrowness of the way to the divine nature and glory, we came more than ever to appreciate the necessity for a Counselor, and a very wise one. We found that even the best of earthly counsel is of value only as it has been directed by the divine counsel: and hence we learned that in every condition in life, in every perplexity, we should listen to the Voice Celestial. When we arrived at this stage of experience the words of our text brought us great comfort and joy, prophetically assuring us of the very thing which we had desired, namely, guidance by divine counsel. Moreover, there is in it the additional assurance that this counsel shall be sufficient for us, so that ultimately, by giving heed thereto, we shall reach the everlasting prize at the end of the racecourse.

It is not surprising that, misinterpreting the divine Word and hence the divine plan for human salvation, many should fancy that they are being guided by God's counsel when really they are merely following the imaginings of their own minds. How many have been even led to absurdities by following what they imagined were impressions of the holy spirit. We know of no more fruitful source of error than this: no channel which the Adversary more frequently uses to delude and mystify those who consecrate themselves to the Lord; some of them finally becoming bound with their own erroneous views as with a chain. . . .

We are not claiming that divine power is limited, so that no other channel than the Scriptures could be used in communicating between God and his people. It would be far from our thought to limit the Almighty; but it is quite our desire to ascertain if he has in any degree limited himself as respects the channels which he would use in counselling his people. We believe in divine providences, but believe that they are means for the bringing of God's people into a condition where they can be taught of God from his Word; and that providences do not supplant God's written Word. We know of nothing whatever in the Scriptures to indicate that God is pleased to reveal his will to his people, or to counsel them, by impressing thoughts upon their attention. Perhaps we ought to make an exception of the apostles, for possibly the Lord may so have dealt with them, inasmuch as they were used in the writing of the divine counsel for our instruction—the Scriptures. . . .

Some reject the Word of the Lord **in toto**: others accept it nominally, but really never accept its counsels in the sense of putting them into practice in their daily lives. These latter are as truly rejectors as the former, although they include the vast majority of nominal Christians. The Apostle calls attention to the difference between the hearer of the Word and the doer of the Word: also in the first Psalm the Lord points out to us the blessedness of those who walk according to the divine law or counsel, and not according to the counsel of the ungodly, saying, "He shall be like a tree planted by the river of water that bringeth forth fruit in its season. His leaf therefore shall not wither; and the thing which he doeth shall prosper." This class has one great, chief object in life: it is to serve the Lord acceptably, and thus to cultivate the character which he enjoined, and thus to be fitted and prepared for the glories and blessing promised to such in the life to come. As the Apostle Paul declared, so say all of these: "This one thing I do"—and such shall prosper in that one thing which they are doing; such will win the great prize set before us in the gospel. . . .

The Lord's counsel speaks to us, instructing us as to the attitude of heart necessary if we would receive and be profited by his counsels. He says, "The **meek** will he guide in judgment, the **meek** will he teach his way." Ah, yes! But how often pride, and haughtiness of language and demeanor, mark those who would be teachers of God's people. But such marks to those who are looking to the Lord for counsel, should be indications that such teachers are not meek, are therefore not taught of God, nor in an attitude to receive his instruction; and that consequently they would be very unsafe helpers and guides respecting the heavenly counsel.

The heavenly Counselor instructs us, saying, "Forget not the assembling of yourselves together—and so much the more as ye see the day drawing on." The meek who receive the counsel will seek so far as they are able to make use of all the means of grace which the Lord provides, for all possible fellowship of spirit with those who have the mind of Christ they will enjoy and seek to use. Those who do otherwise are rejecting the counsel of the Lord against themselves—to their own detriment and injury. Wherever the spirit of the Lord is in any heart, it will surely seek fellowship in others of like spirit. Hence, if our own hearts are in good condition, we will proportionately desire fellowship with the Lord, expressing ourselves in prayer and hearing the testimony of the Lord through his Word in reply; and similarly we will enjoy mingling with the Lord's people. "He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen." Any lack of fellowship with all who love the Lord and are consecrated to him should be considered by us as a sure sign of a spiritual decline, and should be correspondingly opposed with all our energy, until our hearts come back to that condition in which we have (as an assurance that we have passed from death unto life) the fact that we love the brethren.—1 John 3:14.

Our heavenly Father counsels us again in the words, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." How often would this good counsel of the Lord, if remembered, bring a blessing and a relief from the attacks of the Adversary who fain would make us believe that our unavoidable weaknesses and imperfections are proofs that we are not the Lord's. With this counsel before us, what a strength we should have in combating the besetments of the world, the flesh and the devil. How it should lead us in the moment of temptation to lift up our hearts in prayer to the Lord for "grace to help in time of need." The Lord wishes us to learn the lesson of our own weakness and imperfection and to learn to go to him, for strength and succor—not before we need it, but **"in time of need,"** in every time of trouble.

What a blessing comes to us with a true appreciation of the Lord's counsel, "Godliness **with** contentment is great gain." The combination of godliness and contentment is necessary to our peace and spiritual prosperity. However much **godliness** the discontented may have or seek to have, they cannot have true happiness. However **contented** any may be in sin or ungodliness, he is certainly losing a great deal in not having godliness—not only as respects the present life, but also that which is to come. Godliness with contentment does not mean indifference to our condition and welfare, either spiritual or temporal: the child of God is to be ambitious, especially in spiritual things, and in the use of every earthly talent to the Master's praise: but while putting forth every energy and not slothful in the Lord's business, nor in any other business in which he may engage with the Lord's approval, but fervent in his spirit, serving the Lord, he may be **content** with such blessings upon his efforts as the Lord is pleased to grant, so that while still pursuing and still achieving he may continually be thankful and restful at heart, singing,—

"Content, whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me."

No counsel of the Lord could be much more important than this at the present juncture; for we are in a time when more and more the whole world of mankind is growing discontented as well as losing Godlikeness. God's people have therefore all the more need to cultivate these qualities: not only for their own sakes, but also as helpers, counselors and exemplars for the world.

How many of God's consecrated people, through neglect to appropriate it to themselves, have lost the great comfort and peace which should go with the promise of our Counselor. "All things work together for good, to them that love God; to the called ones according to his purpose." The well-instructed soul has learned that the good here referred to is not always, nor very often, earthly good,—temporal advantage: they that love God and are called according to his purpose, and have been giving attentive heed to his counsel, know that the "all things" include **chiefly** the trials and disappointments and perplexities and difficulties and temptations of the narrow way, in which they have consecrated themselves to walk; and that the **"good"** which will be worked out, will be in the chiseled and polished characters, likenesses to the character of Christ, which through faithfulness unto the end will be perfected in the divine honor and glory and immortality promised by the Lord to his faithful.

What good counsel comes to us in the words, applicable to all who desire to please and serve the Lord, "I will set a guard upon my lips, that I sin not with my mouth." How many heart aches and heart burnings would be saved by a careful compliance with this good counsel. And a great blessing comes from every attempt to follow it; because, the lips merely give expression to that which is in the heart. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Whoever, therefore, starts to guard his lips will find if he be a child of God, if he have a new heart, that the controlling of the lips will necessarily mean a correction of the heart in righteousness. He who would guard his lips will soon find that the easiest as well as the best way to do it is to get his heart filled with love and good wishes—to the Lord's people and to all others; then the good thoughts and good sentiments within will leave no room for bitter expressions, slanders, malice, expressions of hatred or strife, which gender roots of bitterness and defile many.

Another counsel of the Lord which seems to be overlooked of late is, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for some thereby have entertained angels unawares." In olden times the spirit beings on numerous occasions presented themselves in human form to deliver messages to mankind, but the Lord's general method during this Gospel age seems to be to use his people in the flesh as his messengers. Yet, it is nevertheless still true, that all who have the Lord's spirit should be hospitably inclined; especially toward any whom they may have reason to believe are fellow pilgrims in the path of life and fellow servants of the great King. And all who are ever thus entertained as the Lord's servants, and because they are his, should be extremely careful that as ambassadors for God their influence, wherever they may go, may be an influence for good, a blessing upon their fellow servants, an influence that will glorify our Lord.

We might take up hundreds of the testimonies of our great Counselor and find them full of wisdom and blessing to us; yet the blessing would be not merely in the knowing of his counsel, but in proportion as we should **obey** the counsel, and thus **do the will** of our Father who is in heaven. We will not go further with this part of the subject, except to call to memory that the point of the Lord's counsel most prominently set forth is, as the Apostle declares, summed up in the word, Love—to God and to our fellows. All the meekness that he instructs us to have, all the patience, together with all the experiences in life which he permits, are designed merely to cultivate, and to bring to a large development in us, the spirit of Love which, as our Counselor declares, is "the bond of perfectness;" because Love represents the only condition of the heart which could be entirely acceptable to God.

While the outward affairs of life are to be regulated and harmonized with the Lord's character and will, as expressed to us in his Word, yet the object sought is to have these good qualities proceed from an **inward source,** a regenerated heart; a heart from which Selfishness has been dethroned, and in which Love has been enthroned as the moving impulse of life. Love to God will regulate all of our obedience to him, so that it will not be merely outward and formal, ceremonies, but worship in spirit and in truth. Love to fellow-men—especially to the household of faith—will guide us in our dealings with them; for love thinks no evil, love slanders not, love backbites not, love bears no false witness, love seeks not her own interests merely, but also the welfare of others, is not proud, but humble, meek, gentle, easy to be entreated, long-suffering and patient.

Let us remember, however, that this condition of perfect love is not to be attained in a moment, but is to be the **result** of the experiences of the present life, in obedience to the divine counsel. However, the degree of success and rapidity in cultivating this spirit depends very largely upon our zeal, and the heed which we give to the great Counselor. Those who have given themselves wholly to the Lord and who have been accepted of him, have doubtless even from the beginning of their new life in Christ known considerable of this devotional love for God and for his people, which should increase daily. But the devotional flame which at the beginning of the Christian's experience is fearful and merely seeks the Lord for safety, may by and by reach such a development that it cries out to God, "Oh Lord, I delight to do thy will. Gladly will I toil and suffer, or bear thy reproaches, and serve thy people; if thus I may know that I am pleasing and acceptable to thee!" This is the right spirit, and this spirit should continue all the way down to the close of the battle. But such will find testings and trials by the way, to prove how deep and how sincere is their spirit of love; and where it is genuine, where the good seed of the divine truth has fallen into an honest heart, it will grow, it will thrive upon trials, disappointments; and against every opposition it will bring forth in life a fruitage of good works, of service for the Lord and for his people,—which may be large or small according to the opportunities enjoyed by all the "overcomers."

"And Afterward Receive Me to Glory"

It will be noticed that this prophetic promise is not, "Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel" and **if** I will render obedience to the counsel, I will afterward be received to glory. On the contrary, the statement is made, not to nominal Christians, nor even to all who make a consecration to the Lord; it refers merely to those who will ultimately be overcomers and constitute the body of Christ, the glorified Church, the bride. The promise in other words is to the entire Christ, Head and body. Each member of the Christ will be guided by the divine counsel and as a result will be received to glory. **All who hear the counsel of the Lord and are guided by it in this present time, will be ultimately accepted as members of the body of Christ, and as such will be received to the divine glory.**

The Counselor is wise, infallible, unerring; he knows the end from the beginning, he knows exactly what will please himself; he knows therefore how to direct us in his way. His Word of counsel "is sufficient." His spirit is the spirit of holiness, the spirit of love, the spirit of the truth; and wherever this spirit dwells in the hearts of his people it must be through a conformity to his Word of counsel, his guidance. For all who thus put themselves completely under the Lord's supervision, and who resign their wills entirely to his will, there can be no question as to the result. **Assuredly,** such will afterward be received into glory.

Our Counselor through his Word tells us that there is an earthly or terrestrial glory, and that there is a heavenly or celestial. (1 Cor. 15:40, 41.) Hence his counsel is appropriate not only to the class which is now running for the prize of the heavenly glory—seeking to make their calling and election sure through faithfulness unto sacrifice—but the same counsel will be appropriate to the world in the coming age. It will be just as necessary for the world to hear the Voice of the great Counselor as for us. They, too, will need to learn the various lessons which the elect learn in the present life.

Those who will hear the Voice of the Counselor then, in the Millennium, will hear it through the glorified High Priest; and those who will render obedience to that counsel will be received to the **earthly glory** while those who will not hear his Voice will be cut off in the second death. (Acts 3:23.) The earthly glory was represented in the first man, Adam, and such as attain to it will attain to a condition of glory similar to that which he enjoyed before he sinned. The heavenly glory is represented in our Lord Jesus since his resurrection, highly exalted, the express image of the Father's person, and all the faithful of this Gospel age (tested by the severe trials of the present time) shall be made like unto their Lord and share his glory; as it is written,—"We shall be like him and see him as he is"—"partakers of the divine nature."

If there are difficulties in the race-course set before us in the Gospel age, there are advantages also. If we are required to walk by faith and not by sight, nevertheless the Lord's grace is sufficient for us, and the results promised are "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." If the trial is sharper and the conflict more intense, it has also the advantage of being shorter than that coming upon the world in the Millennial age; so we may say with the Apostle, these "light afflictions which are but for a **moment,**" work out for us a better hope.

Let us, dearly beloved, take yet more earnest heed to the Word which has been spoken, remembering the Master's expression, He that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him to a man who builded his house upon a rock and the rain descended and the floods came and the storm beat upon that house and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock—a sure foundation.

—Z. '98:5-9.

The Forerunner of Christ

Luke 1:5-17.

Golden Text—"And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways."—Luke 1:76.

In considering this familiar narrative we are reminded of the Lord's great care in preparing his chosen instruments for the various parts of his great work. Abraham's life was a long discipline of faith and patience; for he was to be the father of the faithful, a type of the fatherhood of God, and a worthy example to all his children, both those under the Law and those under the covenant of grace.—Rom. 4:11-17.

Moses was specially prepared to be a leader, lawgiver and judge to Israel. Born under the humiliating conditions of bondage and the imperial sentence of death, he was providentially protected, preserved and adopted into the royal family, where he received a measure of that education necessary for his future service; and after that he had forty years more in the retirement of domestic life, which, under the operations of divine grace, hardened his virtues and mellowed the ardor of his temperament. Thus God gave to Israel a trained and experienced character as a leader. Similarly, suitable preparation for the positions they were to occupy or the work they were to do is very noticeable in other cases, both of Bible record and of subsequent history. Mark the case of Samuel, a child of prayer, devoted to the Lord from his infancy, and trained in the service of the Lord under the care of Eli; and of Paul, called from his infancy, instructed in the law, and zealous toward God even while ignorantly persecuting the saints, verily thinking he did God service.

John the Baptist was another illustration. The preparations in this, as in most of these cases, began before he was born, in the hearts of his parents,—"They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Verse 6.) Consider also subsequent reformers known to all through the pages of history, and mark the providential leadings in their preparation for their work long before they could have any knowledge of the work that was before them. Consider also how the Lord has been preparing the Gospel Church for its Millennial work; and how he prepared the ancient worthies for their Millennial work in the earthly phase of the coming Kingdom; and so on through all the list of his "chosen vessels." **The "chosen vessel"** is always **a prepared vessel** for the service intended: and **that the preparation is of God, and not of himself, is manifest from the fact that in every case it began long before the chosen one knew of the ends to be accomplished or the significance of the providential circumstances or the measures of discipline.**

The principal preparation which God requires for every part of his honorable service is holiness of heart—devotedness to God and to his righteousness and truth, and abhorrence of all that is unholy, unclean. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." There are, however, some parts of the Lord's service which reflect no honor upon those engaged in it, though they do reflect honor upon the wisdom and power of God who is able to make even the wrath of his enemies to praise him, by his power to outgeneral and overrule their evil for good to his cause. For instance, Satan, and every other evil worker, whose evil devices are, by divine power, overruled for good of God, unwittingly serve some of the purposes of God—sometimes for the discipline of the children of God and sometimes for the revolutionizing of affairs in the world.

The prenatal influences upon John the Baptist were such that, from his birth, his heart was inclined toward God and holiness (verse 15); and the training and discipline of his life were such that at maturity he was ready for the work of introducing to Israel the long-promised Messiah. Of him it was foretold, "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord." Yes, he was a great man; a great preacher and a great prophet. Jesus said he was the greatest of all the prophets. (Matt. 11:11.) But he was not great in the eyes of men. He was never a guest at the palace of Herod, but he was a prisoner in his prisons. He was not an esteemed orator in the Jewish synagogues, but he was "a voice crying in the wilderness." He was not arrayed in purple and fine linen, nor did he fare sumptuously every day, but his raiment was of camel's hair and a leathern girdle, and his meat was locusts and wild honey. And though, for a time, the multitudes were attracted by his preaching, he was soon abandoned by the people, imprisoned by the king, and finally beheaded in prison.

And yet John was truly a great man; for he was "great in the sight of the Lord." He was great in the sense that he that ruleth his own spirit according to the principles and precepts of the divine Word is greater than he that taketh a city. (Prov. 16:32.) All the natural aspirations and human ambitions were made subservient to his one mission of introducing his cousin, Jesus of Nazareth, a man of humble birth and circumstances, as the Messiah, to whom he knew the gathering of the people would be after he had accomplished his mission of introducing him. (Gen. 49:10.) But John was pleased to have it so, and declared that in performing this service for his cousin according to the flesh, and thus accomplishing his part in the divine purpose and prophecy, his joy was fulfilled. (John 3:29.) And, by the eye of faith discerning in the humble Nazarene the Son of God, he said to the people, "One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" "He must increase, but I must decrease."—Luke 3:16; John 1:29; 3:30.

It was this meekness, this complete self-abnegation and singleness of purpose to accomplish the righteous will of God, that constituted the moral greatness of John. And because he was in that attitude of heart where the Lord could use him he was privileged to be the greatest, the most highly honored, of all the prophets, in that he was chosen to introduce, to Israel and the world, the Anointed Son of God, the Redeemer and future King of the whole earth. Thus he became a great man, a great preacher of righteousness and truth, the greatest of all the prophets, and one of the heirs of the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God.

What a profitable lesson is in this for all who would seek true greatness—to be "great in the sight of the Lord." It calls to mind that wise admonition of the Apostle, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time." (1 Pet. 5:6.) The way of the cross, the way of humiliation and self-abasement, is the way to the crown, to that true honor that cometh from God only. Where now is the honor of the great ones of earth who have passed away—the Caesars, the Herods, the Alexanders and Napoleons; the Jewish scribes and Pharisees and doctors of the law and Rabbis? and where all the reverend Popes and Cardinals and Bishops and Priests of the great Apostasy who proudly flourished in their day? They have all come to naught, and in the Millennial judgment they will come forth to shame and confusion of face, stripped of all their honors. But those truly great ones—"great in the sight of the Lord"—are reserved unto honor and glory and power at the appearing and Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Let the lesson come home to each of our hearts, —"He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." Patiently submit to the humbling now, and hopefully and joyfully wait for the glory to be revealed by and by in all the faithful. **This is not the time nor place for rewards, but for discipline and service,** for making ready for the future exaltation, that we may appear without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, joint heirs of our Redeemer.—Z. '96: 10-11.

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Personal responsibility to the Redeemer who purchased, and to the heavenly Father who provided the gracious arrangement, lies at the foundation of all true consecration to God in Christ.—Z. '97:34.

The truth is a crucial test of our consecration, true love and devotion to our Lord. He **seeketh** such as worship and serve him in spirit and in truth —from love.—Z. '97:177.

Who Is He That Condemneth?

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."—Isa. 54:17.

WHAT A HERITAGE! What would one not give, sacrifice, to have this assurance which pertains not only to the life which now is, but goes far beyond, lays hold upon and blesses the eternal interests of all who attain this heritage. It is not applicable to one individual alone, but as declared, it belongs to all the servants of the Lord—every true spiritual Israelite may claim it, rest upon it and rejoice in it.

Our text may to some extent be applicable to re-gathered and re-favored Israel after the flesh, in the near future when the Lord will fulfil to them all his good promises; but without question it belongs to spiritual Israel—new creatures in Christ Jesus, joint-heirs with him of the Abrahamic promises as the seed of Abraham.—Gal. 3:29.

Spiritual Israel may sometimes feel as our Lord himself expressed the matter, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and may not always realize the object and necessity for some of the experiences through which the Lord permits Zion as a whole, and each individual Christian as her members or children, to pass; they may see that at times the Lord has apparently permitted the great adversary or his deluded servants to forge against them grievous weapons of destruction, and to assail them in health or in their social peace or financially; sometimes these weapons of the adversary have seemed to do terrible execution against them, and many may wonder how the Lord's good promise of our text is being fulfilled: "No weapon that is formed against her shall prosper."

Many tongues have arisen against the Lord's Zion as a whole and against each member individually—tongues laden with the "poison of asps," tongues bitter with envy, malice, hatred and strife,—tongues which hesitate not to slander and misrepresent, to say all manner of evil falsely. And to a large extent these weapons and tongues have succeeded, have wrought havoc with the sheep, as also with the Shepherd; and God permitted it—he neither stopped the weapon nor stilled the tongue; and yet he assures us apparently to the contrary of this in our text. What is the true explanation of this situation?

The explanation is that "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you"—ye are "new creatures" in Christ Jesus, "old things are passed away, behold all things have become new." (Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 5:17.) The weapons and tongues attempt to assail us as new creatures, but fail of this and merely do injury to the old creature—to the flesh, which we have already consecrated to death anyway. **By helping to kill or to mortify the flesh, our adversaries are really helping us as "new creatures" instead of hindering us as designed.** God thus turns what seems to harm us into everlasting joy and blessing.

The context bears out this thought, declaring, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." v. 13.) Ah yes, these spiritual sons of God need the instructions of the Lord's Word in order to understand his dealings—in order to enable them to have the great peace here predicted. . . .

John 14-27
" 16-33
" 6-11

We see that it is because of God's desires to have us members of his "elect" Church that he has favored us in advance of the world with the knowledge of his goodness and redeeming love, and that he has anointed us with his spirit and called us to this high, heavenly calling. Praise his name!

As the teaching of the Lord to the Church belongs to the present time, so does the peace of those who are taught apply in the present time, and is in proportion to our readiness to receive instruction and come to a knowledge of God. Those who instructed by the divine Word have reached a large degree of knowledge of the divine character through the divine plan, may, should, must have the peace of God which passeth all understanding, ruling in their hearts. **If they have not the peace they cannot have the joy of the Lord**; and if they have not this, even under the present trying circumstances and conditions, it is because they have not been sufficiently taught of the Lord; and if they have been long in the school of Christ without this attainment, it is an evidence that they have not been giving the proper earnest heed to the Word,—it is an evidence that they have been following the traditions of men rather than inquiring for the old paths, the way of the Lord. Let us all take heed lest we let slip those things which we have heard, remembering that the earthen vessels in which we have the treasure of the new mind are leaky, and that this necessitates our keeping near to the fountain spring—near to the Lord, near to his Word and, hence, near to all others who are close to the Lord and to his Word.

The context further declares respecting this class under consideration, "In righteousness shalt thou [the godly] be established; thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee." (vs. 14.) This also applies to the present life and not to the life of glory. Those who are not established in righteousness now will not be accounted worthy to be sharers in the first resurrection, respecting which it is written, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." Righteousness, justice, must be the foundation of every character acceptable to God: as justice is the foundation of the Lord's throne, as it is the foundation of all with which he has to do; and **if we are his it must be the substratum of our Christian character.** We must learn to be just before we are generous; we must learn that while love may call for sacrifices, duty, obligation calls for justice first. In the blindness and darkness which came to us from the dark ages, before the anointing of our eyes with the eyesalve of truth from the words of the Lord and his apostles—when in our blindness we conceived of God as unjust and unloving because of misrepresentation of his plan, we had so low an ideal before our minds that we found it easy to excuse injustice or cruelty or selfishness, since, according to our false standard and misconceptions of God, he was the exemplar of all this. The Lord undoubtedly had mercy upon us on account of our ignorance and blindness; but now since he has opened the eyes of our understanding, has shown us his own justice and his own boundless love, and since we are seeking to copy these, **there is no longer room for us to excuse unrighteousness or injustice in our hearts.** It may require time to bring every word and act and thought into harmony with the new mind instructed from the Word;—we may never succeed to our own satisfaction in this matter in our present life, because of the weaknesses of the flesh through which our wills must operate; but we can at least make strong effort, and by the Lord's assisting grace accomplish great things in righteousness, not only of intention, but in righteousness of thought, of judgment, of conduct.

This righteousness in which the Lord's children are to be established, is further explained by the statement, "Thou shalt be for from oppression, for thou shalt not fear." As we look back into the dark ages we see that it was full of oppression practiced in the name of the Lord and in the name of righteousness and in many cases, undoubtedly, practiced conscientiously. In all good conscience men oppressed one another because of their fears, their false theories declaring that the Lord was about to torture to all eternity all who did not accept a certain theory of belief, and it seemed to them the veriest kindness to inflict torture by thumbscrew, rack and stake for the correction of heretics—with a view to saving them possibly from an eternity of suffering; and with a view also to hinder them from misleading others to such an awful eternity. This oppression, this cruelty, was the result of fear, and the fear was the result of misunderstanding of God's character—because they were taught of men and not taught of the Lord, as the Prophet declares, "Their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men."—Isa. 29:13.

As the light of the truth comes into our hearts giving us a true knowledge of the Lord, instructing us as his children, perfect love casts out fear, and proportionately it casts out superstition and intolerance and oppression, as the Prophet here declares. The Lord's people are to love religious liberty for themselves and are correspondingly to grant the same to all others. "Thou shalt be for from oppression, for thou shalt not fear." This class will be anxious to set men free, not anxious to enslave them. On the other hand the declaration is, "Thou shalt be far from terror, for it shall not come near thee;" the Lord's people ought to be the most fearless people in the world as respects earthly disasters and calamities; taught of the Lord they have learned that there is only one being who needs to be feared—the one who has the power to destroy the soul. They do indeed fear to displease or offend him; and yet, having learned of his goodness, mercy and love, they do not fear him in the ordinary sense of the word, but rejoice in him, confide in him, trust him as a child trusts a father, and this confidence grows in proportion as they are taught of the Lord—in proportion as they learn to trust, both from the Word of the Lord and from his providences, his dealings with them.

The text further shows that there will be not only individual oppositions to be encountered, but that Zion as a whole will be assailed by foes; as we read, "Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me; whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake." (vs. 15.) Wonderful words of consolation! We cannot at present judge to what extent this may have a fulfilment not many months hence, when there shall be a general gathering together of opponents to the truth and its servants. Already there have been various combinations instigated by the adversary, and they have all come to naught. They have really harmed none because it is impossible to injure the very elect. They have indeed caused the stumbling of some, and heartaches to many, yet, nevertheless, under the Lord's providence they have worked out deeper and richer experiences in all who were in the proper attitude of heart to be thus taught.

"Nearer my God to thee,
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me."

The assurance here given is nothing but what we might reasonably know when we consider the Lord's own declaration, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. 55:11.) So surely as our Heavenly Father has purposed the blessing of all the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham, just so surely it will be accomplished. And as the power of the Adversary raised against our Lord Jesus and the weapons formed against him, and which smote him down in death prevailed for a time, yet were merely so much of the outworking of the foreknown divine plan, so all of the machinations of the Adversary and the oppositions of the world and the flesh as well, cannot hinder the development of the various members of the body of Christ who, as the Heavenly Father has predicted, are to be joint- heirs with his Son in the Millennial Kingdom of blessing.

The Word of the Lord declares that even those who crucified the Master, and who, in their conscientious conviction that they were doing right, said, "His blood be upon us and upon our children"—these are all yet to be the subjects of divine mercy in due time; because as the Apostle Peter declares that they did it "through ignorance." (Acts 3:17.) The Lord foretells the time that they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall all mourn because of him; and he foretells, too, that at that time so far from crushing them or torturing them, he will favor them by pouring upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication.—Zech. 12:10.

It is a different matter, however, when those who "have been enlightened and have tasted of the good Word of God and of the powers of the age to come and have been made partakers of the holy spirit," shall become accusers of the brethren, adversaries, persecutors. No blessings are promised to these; but the declaration is that "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." Judas was an ensample of this class in his day; of him the Master said in love and in sorrow,—not in anger,—"It were better for that man had he never been born"—his life has been more than wasted. It is not our thought that the Lord will have torments for these in the future, but rather that they die the Second Death, and that in some manner they receive retribution in the present life as did Judas.

But he that is one of the Lord's people, possessed by his spirit, could not be a persecutor or opponent of the brethren,—none surely except those who become poisoned with the adversary's covetous disposition, with the desire for self-exaltation. No wonder that the Lord cautioned us against this sin of covetousness under which Satan originally fell, by which Mother Eve was seduced from loyalty to the Lord, and by which Judas and various other enemies of the Lord have been mislead. Let us be more and more on guard against it. Let others do what they will—whatever the Lord may permit—as for us, let us say with the Apostle, "we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth"—all of our energies and powers must be enlisted on the side of the Lord and on the side of all those who are his. Not a finger **dare** we move, not a whisper **dare** we utter injurious to the members of the body of Christ, of whom the Lord declares, "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, shalt thou condemn."

Who Is He That Condemneth?

The closing words of our text remind us of the language of the Apostle (Rom. 8:31-39), "If God be for us, who can be against us?"—who can prosper against us, who can accomplish anything against us? That God is for us is already manifested in that he spared not his own Son, but redeemed us with his precious blood; and in that he has called us in Christ Jesus to be his "elect" Church, his Bride. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." In harmony with this, our text declares of these servants of the Lord, "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Some may endeavor to condemn them and may indeed succeed in finding fault with them for having imperfect judgments, and being sometimes imperfect in their conduct or words; but what will it matter that such should condemn those whom the Lord approves? The Lord informs us that he knows our imperfections better than any could know them; but that of his own grace he has provided a covering for our unintentional blemishes through the merit of the sacrifice of his Son. Who then shall succeed in condemning these whom God approves, whom God justifies, whom God declares to be right and acceptable to him through Jesus Christ? Others may claim that they are actually as nearly perfect as some of the faithful "elect," but the difference is that whereas God must reject all to any degree blemished, these have the covering of his Grace in Christ and are accepted according to their intentions and endeavors; and, therefore, they shall be able to stand, for he is able to make them stand in their testing or judgment.—Rom. 14:4.

Let us as members of the house of Sons, accepted in the Beloved, take from our Father's Word in this text the strong consolation which he intends it should give us. Let our faith triumphantly sing, and our joy and rejoicing in the Lord know no bounds. According unto our faith it will be unto us. But while it will be on account of our faith that the Lord will approve of us, accept us, and bless us, he has, nevertheless, assured us in advance that where the tree of faith exists and grows, the character development, the fruitage of the faith will surely also abound, and that thus by our works (imperfect though they be) we shall give evidence of the faith that is in us. Such a living faith may well cause rejoicing in the house of our pilgrimage, with this assurance that even the machinations of our enemies shall work our for us blessings, under our Heavenly Father's supervising care, wisdom, love and power.

—Z. '02:230-233.

Laborers in the Vineyard

Matthew 20:1-16.

> "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."—Matthew 5:45.

THIS **parable is difficult of interpretation** so as to make all of its facts find fulfilment. The Great Teacher gave it as a parable of the Kingdom; hence we know that it applies to the experiences of the Church **during this Gospel Age.** If we were to apply the different intervals mentioned to different epochs in this Age, we would have difficulty; for the Apostles and others, called early in the Age, did not live and labor throughout the entire period. Again, in so applying it, we would face the proposition that only those at the beginning of the Age had definite promise as respects a reward—that all others got merely the assurance that they would receive what would be right.

Another difficulty which we would encounter in interpreting the parable is how to apply the murmuring of those who were first called and last rewarded. Other Scriptures show us that the Apostles and others first called in the Gospel Age will experience their resurrection change before those who will be living at the Second Coming of Christ. St. Paul declares that the dead in Christ shall rise first, and that then those of us who are alive shall be changed. Furthermore, it would be unthinkable that the Apostles and others of the early Church would murmur at the reward to be given them.

All of these difficulties must be borne in mind when we attempt to find a solution of this parable that would fit the experiences of the Church as a whole during the Gospel Age.

If we attempt to apply the parable to the individual experiences of God's people, we have trouble also. Applying it thus, we might say that those who begin a Christian life early, and are found faithful in the Lord's service at the evening-time of life, would be the ones first called and promised a reward. Others coming in later, and serving the Lord's cause with only a portion of their time, strength and talent, would correspond to those who heard the later call—some even at the eleventh hour. If we interpret the parable as meaning that all these will get a similar reward regardless of the time spent in the Master's service, we would still have difficulty with the fact that those called earliest murmured, complained, were dissatisfied.

On the contrary, we are surely convinced that any who would murmur against the Lord's will and His just and loving arrangements for His people, **will never obtain the Kingdom reward beyond the veil.** We may feel assured that any who receive the Master's "Well done" and the resurrection change will be far from murmuring. They will rejoice and be glad, and feel more than rewarded for every little service and sacrifice. How then can we apply this parable consistently, in harmony with the teachings of other Scriptures respecting the reward of the Kingdom class? We can think of only one way, and that is to **apply the parable entirely to present-life experiences of the Kingdom class, especially of those who will be living at the close of this Gospel Age.**

Bro Russell
the steward.
The penny
The sealing
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1918 which Bro
Russell gave
to both
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veil.

Partly Applicable to the Jews

For sixteen hundred years and more the Jews waited for the First Coming of Messiah and the blessed opportunities which then would come. When Jesus began His ministry, He preached, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," and gave the Jews the privilege of entering into it. That privilege was a "penny," or a reward for their faithful endeavor to keep the Law all their lives. But when the offer of the Kingdom was promulgated, some publicans and sinners were attracted—some who had previously neglected God's service and labors in the vineyard. These new laborers were received by the Lord Jesus and given an opportunity to become His disciples.

The privilege of discipleship was the penny, or reward. The Scribes and the Pharisees, who had been faithful to the Lord God all their lives, considered that they should have had some pre-eminence or preference over the publicans and sinners; and they murmured at any arrangement as unfair which would not give them the first opportunities of the Kingdom. If publicans and sinners were to obtain the blessed privilege of discipleship with Messiah, then surely, they thought, some still higher favor should come to them. They murmured that Jesus received publicans and sinners and ate with them.

One of the Master's parables was intended as a special reproof to the Pharisees along this line. The prodigal son represented a class of Jews not living up to their privileges, while the elder brother represented those who had continuously sought to be earnestly and actively engaged in the Father's business. When some of this prodigal class received the Message of God's Love from the lips of Jesus and His disciples, and returned to the Father's House and were treated graciously and given the same privilege of sonship as those who had not gone astray, but who had labored faithfully, the elder-brother class was offended. They murmured, and refused to participate in the feast. Thus there were some who were first in opportunity, but who were last so far as the blessing was concerned, and others who were last and least found opportunity for receiving the Divine blessing sooner and more effectively.

Applicable Also to Christians

The **general** lesson of the parable would seem to be that we should appreciate the fact that whatever God has to offer is a gift. We should enter His service with loving loyalty to principle, to righteousness. If we have served many years, that privilege of service should be esteemed; and our interest in the Lord's cause should make us happy. From such a standpoint of appreciation of the privilege of service, we should be glad to see the Lord's work carried on, glad to see others enter the service and glad to see them get the same reward that we hope for ourselves. Only those who have such a spirit, such an appreciation of the privileges of the vineyard, such a sympathy for "as many as the Lord our God shall call"—only these will be fit for the Kingdom proper and in readiness to receive the special privileges of knowledge and opportunity when the Kingdom is ready to be announced.

As the typical kingdom was offered to the Jews in Jesus' day, and as those who were newest in Divine service received the same opportunities for a share in the Kingdom with those who had been long engaged, so apparently it is to be in the end, or Harvest time, of this Gospel Age. Those who have all their lives been seeking to be faithful to the Lord and to serve His cause should remember that they have had that much more of privilege and blessing. If some shall enter the Divine service later (than they), they should be rejoiced with as fellow-servants.—Z. '14: 171.

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Solomon was a man of broad ideas, and like other men of similar good mold in this respect, he was the more susceptible to the temptation to think the Lord's ways and methods narrow; and to seek to be more broad and liberal than the Almighty. His error along this line is particularly shown in his recognition of foreign religions, which, according to God's law, had no right to be recognized in any sense or degree, in Israel.—Z. '98: 187.

◆

The Lord uses in his service, as instruments of his providence, those of his consecrated people who put themselves in the proper condition for his service.—Z. '02: 69.

The Palace of Blessedness

Matthew 5: 1-12.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."—Verse 8.

OF THE GREAT TEACHER we read, "He spake as never man spake." He was the Man Christ Jesus, but He was not a fallen man, not a sinner. His life was transferred from a heavenly to an earthly condition: hence, as a Man, He was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26.) More than this, at the time of His consecration to death, He entered into a covenant of sacrifice with Jehovah, and thereupon He received His anointing of the Holy Spirit—this was the power of the Highest. What need have we for wonder, then, when we read that He taught as one having authority—as one who knew, who understood clearly and positively the things which He presented!

The eight Beatitudes illustrate the difference between the teachings of Jesus and all other teachings from every other quarter. He had a new view of what to present. His is a different Message from all other messages to this day. While other teachers instructed the people to hold up their heads, to remember noble ancestors, etc., and thereby be blessed, Jesus encouraged His hearers to realize that the poor in spirit, the humble-minded, would receive the great blessings.

While other teachers held forth the rich, the great, the learned, the mighty, the influential amongst men as the patterns to be copied, if happiness would be attained, Jesus, in these beatitudes, sets forth the reverse. His prescriptions for happiness have indeed been followed by a few, and these alone appreciate their merit and are finding the blessings promised, both for the present life and for that which is to come.

The contrast between the Ten Commandments of the Mosiac Law and the eight Beatitudes declared by Jesus on the Mount, illustrate in considerable degree the difference between the Law Dispensation, and the Dispensation of Grace. The Law commanded the "house of servants" what they should and what they should not do. "Moses was faithful as a servant over all his house." (Heb. 3:5, 6.) He delivered to the "house of servants"—typical Israel—the Divine Law, by the keeping of which they might be blessed and used in the Divine service.

But the Gospel Message is a still higher one. It does not ignore the Law given by Moses to the "house of servants." It recognizes the Law as just, and holy, and good, and that Israel did not obtain that which they sought, because unable, through the weakness of heredity, to keep the spirit of God's perfect Law. The New Dispensation, which Jehovah inaugurated through Jesus, provides a full Ransom sacrifice for all sinners, and proposes ultimately to bless and to assist all out of all the weakness of heredity—not only Israel, but the entire race of Adam. The Law feature will be maintained, but grace and mercy will come in to render the necessary assistance to the keeping of the Law. But before that New Era of world blessing is introduced, the Divine arrangement proposes to gather a special class, all of whom must be "copies of God's dear Son." (Rom. 8:29, Diaglott.") These are to be His joint-heirs, **in every sense of the word**—in the sufferings and self-denials and persecutions and sacrifices of the present life, as well as in the glories, the honor and immortality of the future life.

Called To Be the Elect

The Mission of Jesus and His teachings, at His first advent, **were not to the world, but to a special class:** "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear." The Message for the world will go forth at His second advent, and we have the assurance that then all the blinded eyes will be opened and all the deaf ears, will be unstopped, and the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the whole earth.

In today's study, Jesus was addressing such of the Jews as had the hearing ear, such as had an inclination to be His disciples. He was addressing the class to whom He said, "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me, that where I am there shall My disciple be." It was to this class that the Beatitudes were spoken, not with thunderings of Sinai, not with threats of vengeance and death if the lessons were not learned.

The Master was addressing such as believed on Him, the class for whom He was about to appear in the presence of God, after finishing His sacrificial work, to impute to them His covering for their blemishes and imperfections, and to give them a standing with the Father, and to make their sacrifices "holy and acceptable to God." (Rom. 12:1.) He was instructing these as to how they could best make their calling and election sure, how they could the more successfully win the great "prize" to which they were called. Others may gather precious lessons from these Beatitudes, but only the spirit-begotten can appreciate them fully.

The Palace of Blessedness

The foundation of the Palace of Blessedness is **Humility.** None can ever hope for a share in the Messianic Kingdom except as he is humble-minded: "Blessed are the **poor in spirit,** for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." To such and such only will this great blessing come. It would never do for God to accept as a member of the Kingdom class one possessed of the spirit of pride and selfish ambition. In Satan's experience we have an illustration of what pride might accomplish. **God proposes that humility shall be a primary test as respects the Bride class.**

The Palace Reception Room, upon the foundation of Humility, on the ground-floor of the Palace, is the chamber of **Sorrow**—mourning. Only such as know what it is to be touched with the feelings of human infirmities can be members of the Royal Priesthood, which by and by is to deal with and assist back to harmony with God whoever wills of all humanity. Besides, this Reception-Room of sorrow and mourning seems necessary for our complete separation from the things of the world, the flesh and the Devil. Few have ever been saints without passing through sorrowful experiences. We remember Jesus' words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Yes, the Reception Room of mourning is necessary for us before we can appreciate the comfort which God has provided for this particular class—"His elect": "Blessed are they that **mourn,** for they shall be comforted."

The Palace Library is Meekness. None can be successfully taught of the Lord and fully enjoy the Palace of Blessedness without the quality of meekness or teachableness. Into this Library the follower of Jesus must frequently go, there to learn valuable lessons, without which he could not make progress in his faith-building and character-development: "Blessed are the **meek,** for they shall inherit the earth." As members of Messiah, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus, their Lord, these will come into the full possession, the full control of the earth. For a thousand years this control will be maintained while mankind will be taught valuable lessons and be uplifted out of sin and degradation and death to the perfect manhood lost by Father Adam, redeemed by Jesus. Only at the close of the Messianic reign will The Meek turn over their inheritance, the earth, to mankind. Then those of the earth who will receive the control will be such of mankind as will have learned their lessons of meekness.

The Dining Room: Hunger for Righteousness. All who will be joint-heirs with Christ will be lovers of righteousness and haters of iniquity, in likeness of the Redeemer. It is very important, therefore, that in our Palace of Blessedness we have a large and well-appointed Dining Room, where our hunger and thirst for righteousness may be encouraged and satisfied at the same time. "Blessed are they who **hunger and thirst after righteousness,** for they shall be filled." They will get their fill of it, for their own perfection in the First Resurrection, and in the establishment of righteousness in all the earth, during the thousand years of Messiah's reign.

The Door of the Palace: Mercy. One of the most important lessons for the New Creature to learn is love, sympathy, mercy. In the Divine arrangement we must go out and in this door constantly. Our own imperfections continually require Divine mercy and should as continually impress upon us the merciful disposition toward those with whom we have to do. Only thus will we be fitted and prepared to be faithful and merciful members of the Royal Priesthood in dealing with and blessing the world of mankind during the Messianic Kingdom. "Blessed are the **merciful,** for they shall obtain mercy"; "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses"; "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

The Palace Window, through which we may see God, is **Purity of Heart.** We cannot, while in the flesh, attain absolute purity in thought, word and deed, but we can have **heart purity**—pureness of intention and desire. Only such as have this heart condition may hope to attain the Kingdom honors and to see Him whom no human has seen, neither can see. "Blessed are the **pure in heart,** for they shall see God."

The Parlor of our Palace is represented by the characteristics of the Peacemaker. It implies a certain resistance and victory in respect to our own affairs, furnishing us the opportunity to help others. "Blessed are the **peacemakers,** for they shall be called the children of God."

The Kitchen of our Palace represents the trials and difficulties incidental to the rounding out of our characters as a whole and our proper nourishment and upbuilding spiritually. "Blessed are ye when men shall **revile you** and say all manner of **evil** against you **falsely,** for My Name's sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven."—Z. '12 : 113, 114.

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The Elders should remember that, having accepted special appointment as ministers, they had an added responsibility on behalf of the Lord's flock. Oh, that all the servants of the Lord's cause might take this exhortation to heart, and feel the responsibility that rests upon all who minister in holy things. (And this will apply in a still wider sense, for every brother and every sister is to some extent his brother's and his sister's keeper, and is commissioned to help in watching over the Lord's flock.) The Apostle points out that their commission is not merely that of the Church which selected them to be its servants in holy things, but that they became representatives of the holy spirit, and are therefore not to think lightly of the responsibility which they have accepted. The whole Church of the consecrated are begotten of the spirit, and hence their conscientious action in selecting their Elders, acording to divine direction, is to be considered the work and selection of the holy spirit.—Z. '97 : 280.

"If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Dearly beloved, having received this favor from the Lord, shall we not continue in it, giving no heed to seducing doctrines? And shall we not be faithful to it under all circumstances, defending it against every assault, and with it bearing its reproach? Let us prove our appreciation of it by our loyalty and faithfulness to it.—Z. '03 : 62.

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The New Creature is his brother's keeper in the sense that he must consider his brother's interests as well as his own. Not that he should interfere with his brother's rights, privileges and interests, and be a busybody in other men's matters, but that he should allow the Spirit of the Lord, and the spirit of love, to so thoroughly fill his own heart that he would be a helper and not a stumbling-block to the brethren.—Z. '07 : 172.

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All who are earnestly striving for the victory over self, and the world, and sin, are sure to make a sufficient number of failures along the way to insure them considerable experience in mourning for these deflections,—if their hearts are in the right attitude toward the Lord. Gracious indeed is the promise to such, "They shall be comforted." Our Lord does comfort such with the assurance that he notes their tears as well as their efforts in opposition to sin, and that he is thus preparing them through present experiences and the development of character for the Kingdom.—Z. '98:25.

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We had peace when first we found the Lord and realized the forgiveness of our sins; but those who have made progress in the knowledge of the divine plan and character have found their peace to be an ever increasing one; and those who have advanced some distance in the good way can speak of it in the language of the apostles and realize it in their hearts as being "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."—Z. '97:115.

◇

He who can truly say,—"Thy words were found, and I did **eat them** (I appropriated them diligently to the building up of my character): and thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart;" "my delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law do I meditate day and night: I meditate also of all thy work, O Lord, and talk of thy doings; I meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways; I delight myself in thy statutes, I do not forget thy word" (Jer. 15:16; Psa. 1:2; 77:12; 119:15, 16): these, and only these, are ordering their steps aright, by **taking heed** to the Word of the Lord. —Z. '97:133.

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All who are the Lord's should seek not to be easily wounded or easily hurt, but, on the contrary, to be strong in the Lord, and so covered with the armor of the Lord that harsh words or harsh deeds, either from the brethren or from the world or from the Adversary, would take no effect because of the covering of grace and truth in the armor. —Z. '07:201.

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Some fellow-disciples probably live in your city and in mine. How can we serve them? How can we show them our love and sympathy according to the Lord's "example"? Not in this climate by washing their feet—this would be an inconvenience, the very reverse of a pleasure and service to them, and therefore contrary to the "example.' But we can serve the "body" otherwise, and truly follow the example. We can improve our various opportunities to serve them in matters temporal as well as spiritual. We can be on the lookout, and when we see sadness or discouragement, we can lend a helping hand to lift our brother's burdens, or our sister's sorrows, and we can let them see by **deeds**, as well as words, our anxiety to serve them—figuratively speaking, to wash their feet.

Do not wait until they request your assistance; for in proportion as they are developed disciples, they will not ask your aid. Do not wait until they tell you of their burdens and trials, but watch to anticipate; for in proportion as they partake of our Master's spirit, they will not be complainers, but will live "always rejoicing"—rejoicing even in tribulations.

Be not ashamed of such service of the "body," but seek it and rejoice in it—"ye do serve the Lord, Christ." But still more important than temporal service is our service one of another as "new creatures."—Z. '98:88, 89.

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Since God's love is so great and his power almighty, we have full confidence that no power in earth or heaven can forcibly separate us from his love and the favors granted us in and through our Redeemer. Here rests our full assurance of faith—none can pluck us from our Father's favor and protection:

"In God I have found a retreat,
Where I can securely abide;
No refuge nor rest so complete,
And here I intend to reside."
—Z. '92:310.

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If we be one with Christ here, his faithfulness is our assurance that nothing can separate us from him now or when we shall have finished our course and proved our faithfulness even unto death. "Who," says Paul, "shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For, ... neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:35-39.) This is the blessed assurance of faith that springs spontaneously from the realization of a present and vital union with Christ.—Z. '97:22.

◇

When we consider our dear Master's experience, we do well not to judge much from the last words of the dying, respecting their own spiritual state. False theories may beget false hopes in some, and lead them to believe that they are "sweeping through the gates of the New Jerusalem," when really they are sweeping through the gates into the great prisonhouse of death. The most extravagant dying expressions were not made, so far as the record goes, by the Lord or his inspired Apostles. Nevertheless they had a good hope, a firm hope, a Scriptural hope, a hope which gave them strength for the battle of life and to its very close to be faithful to the Lord and to the Word of his testimony: on the contrary, many of those who die with extravagant expressions of hope on their lips were less faithful to the Lord, less faithful to his Word, and less fully consecrated to his service. Let our faith, confidence and rejoicing be as was that of the Master and the Apostles, not so much in the experience and feelings of the moment as in God's Word and its testimony,—the "more sure word of prophecy, to which we do well to take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place."

—Z. '98: 172-173.

◆

The Master himself was of a warm temperament, and naturally and properly was most drawn toward those who were similarly fervent. There is a lesson here for us, to the effect that, if we would be closest to the Master and most frequently privileged to have fellowship with him, we should similarly have and cultivate this earnest, zealous spirit. Cold, calculating people may have other good qualities, but there is no room for coldness or even luke-warmness on the part of those who have once tasted that the Lord is gracious. With such, the love enkindled should lead to a consuming zeal. It was thus with our Lord Jesus, and this was one of the reasons why he was beloved of the Father. Speaking for him, the prophet said, "The zeal of thine house hath consumed me." Let all who desire to be pleasing in the Lord's sight become so filled with the same spirit of zeal for righteousness and truth that it will consume them as sacrifices upon the Lord's altar. Thus they will be most pleasing and acceptable to him through Jesus our Lord. As a rule, only the warm and zealous ever get free from Babylon. The others coolly calculate and weigh matters so long that the spirit of the world, the flesh and the devil puts fresh blinds on them, even after they have gotten into the light and see considerable.

—Z. '98: 112.

◆

To be established in the truth signifies that we have carefully studied and thoroughly proved it by "the law and the testimony" (Isa. 8:20), and that as a consequence we are convinced of its verity, so that our faith is steadfast and immovable: we know whom we have believed; we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good; we have partaken of the sweets of fellowship with him; we have partaken of his spirit of meekness, faith and godliness to such an extent as to be led into a joyful realization of the fullness of his grace as manifested in the wonderful divine plan of the ages; and we have been permitted to see, not only the various features of that plan, but also the necessity and reasonableness of all its various measures in order to the full accomplishment of its glorious outcome in the fullness of the appointed times. This is what it is to be "established in the present truth." It is indeed a most blessed condition, bringing with it such peace and joy as the world can neither give nor take away.

—Z. '02: 307.

◆

Let us as new creatures, remember that covetousness can come into a heart otherwise pure, and defile the whole, as we see illustrated in the case of Satan, so that of all the things which we need to guard against most carefully this is one of the chief. All the graces of the spirit are opposed to covetousness — meekness, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love, all forbid that we should covet the things of our brethren or the things of the world. Rather, thankfulness should so fill our hearts—gratitude for the manifold mercies and blessings already received, that there will be no room for a covetous thought. True, the Apostle, in our Common Version, is made to say, "Covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Cor. 12:31), but it would be a great mistake to suppose that the Apostle taught that the Lord's people were to covet positions of influence in the Church. We are indeed to desire to have, to enjoy and to use in the Lord's service, as many talents and gifts as possible, but we find the very reverse of the Apostle's thought and teaching that we should covet the honors or possessions of one another. This seems to be a danger point with many, and when we remember that it has proven to be the wreck-rock for many, **it behooves us to be extremely careful to covet merely the Lord's favor and the gifts and talents** by which we can best serve one another and not ourselves.—Z. '02: 219-220.

◆

An idol much worshipped is Denominationalism. . . . This is one of the most dangerous idolatries of all. Its influence upon many is most insidious, for it has a "form of godliness"—it closely resembles the true worship of deity but is delusive and ensnaring in the extreme. Whoever becomes a fervent devotee at these shrines is apt to bind himself hand and foot, and in doing so often thinks, mistakenly, that he does God service. The true Israelite is awake to the fact that there is but one proper object of devotion—to whom his consecrations should be made, and his every power of service rendered—God only.—Z. '98: 134.

◆

NECESSARY FOOD ALWAYS IN "DUE SEASON"

It is necessary, not only to read the Truth, but to think upon it, to make it our own, to strive earnestly to conform our lives to it. It is better, of course, for one to merely read so many pages or chapters of the Bible than to read some worthless thing; but to simply read a certain amount in the Bible without understanding accomplishes little. The Bible needs to be studied; and the Lord has never left His people without teachers of His own choosing, who were able to lead the dear sheep of the great Shepherd's Fold into the green pastures where they could obtain whatever food was needed at that time. As the gradual unfolding of Truth in its times and seasons has added to the quantity and variety of food required by the flock of God for their proper nourishment, it has been supplied by Him through instrumentalities which he has raised up for the purpose in due season.

THE REAL SAINTS OF GOD HAVE NEVER BEEN LEFT WITHOUT ALL NEEDED SUPPLIES IN EVERY AGE. In our own day more Truth has unfolded than at any previous period of the Church's history. More and richer food is now necessary, to strengthen the Church for the peculiar conditions and testings of this day; AND MORE HAS BEEN SUPPLIED.

—Z. '15: 151-152.

The Christian's Battle

(Old Creature)

Your brother has offended you.
Must you forgiveness show
When he has not forgiveness asked?
I really do not know
That you are called to go that far—
He's very much to blame.
Of course, I would not slander him,
Nor injure his good name:
But then, I think, I'd show him, too,
That he has quite offended you.

(New Creature)

How can I be a child of God
And not forgiveness show?
Why, he has covered all my sins,
And I must surely grow
In that sweet grace, which from the heart
Forgives by word and deed.
I would be like the blessed Lord;
For in his Word I read
That he left all the joys of heaven,
To die that I might be forgiven.

(Old Creature)

Your brother has imposed on you;
Says, "All that's thine is mine."
It is not right; what shall you do?
Where will you draw the line?
Why should you share your earthly goods
Which you by thrift acquired?
That which you toil for is your own:
And you are not required
To give to every one who comes
To seek your help, your bread, your home.

(New Creature)

I've often wished that I had lived
When my Lord left his throne,
And trod this earth in human form,
That I might then have shown
My love to him, in service sweet;
But still the suffering Christ
Walks by my side each day and how
Neglected, poor, despised,
Still needing ministries of love—
Now here's the chance, my love to prove.

(Old Creature)

Your brother shows no gratitude
For all your kindly deeds.
He surely should express some thanks,
When you supply his needs.
You've loaned, you've given, you've gone without;
You've helped him all you could;
I really think, in counting up,
You've done more than you should.
I'd call a halt, till he has seen
How very kind you've always been.

(New Creature)

What! work for thanks! then I should lose
A future rich reward;
All service to my brother, now,
Is done to my dear Lord.
Each little sacrifice I make,
Is precious in his sight.
To see my love and zeal abound,
I know is his delight.
For all the wealth beneath the sun,
I would not miss his sweet, "Well done."

(Old Creature)

Your brother slandered you, I hear,
And tried on you to throw
Suspicions base to injure you;
Told things that were not so;
Surmised that you had evil done;
Tells others of his fears.
With coolness meets your looks of love,
And costs you many tears.
You do not owe him in return
A love which he will only spurn.

(New Creature)

'Tis not my brother you hold up;
'Tis not his faults you show.
It is my brother's enemy,
Like you, a deadly foe.
My brother does not do the things
That you lay at his door;
'Tis his old creature that one day
Shall trouble him no more.
The New Creation is my kin,
The New Creation does not sin.

(Old Creature)

Your brother claims he walks in love;
Then why is he so mean?
In many people of the world
There's more goodness seen
Than he shows in his daily life;
You know you're vexed with him,
He has such ugly little ways,
And such besetting sins:
He sorely lacks in Christian grace—
Now, how can he win in the race?

(New Creature)

The way is getting narrower,
More steep and rough it grows;
And fewer they who walk therein.
Lord, I would be of those
Who walk on to the very end
Through good report or ill—
My chief desire to know and do
Thy blessed holy will.
Complete in me thy work of grace,
That I may see thee face to face.—Z. '10: 94, 95.